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Essays on Sāṃkhya and other  
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By Anima Sen Gupta

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Times News Network

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# **ESSAYS ON SĀMĀKHYA AND OTHER SYSTEMS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**



Indira Gandhi National  
Centre for the Arts

## **PARTS I & II**

**ANIMA SEN GUPTA, M. A., Ph. D., *Vidya Vis'arada***  
*Patna University, Patna*



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Centre for the Arts

## PARTS I & II

ANIMA SEN GUPTA, M. A., Ph. D., *Vidyā Vāsārāja*  
Patna University, Patna

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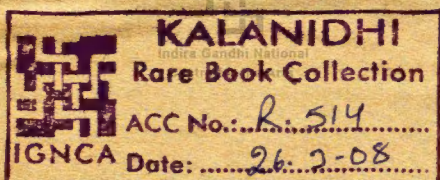
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## FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in writing a foreword to Dr. Anima Sen Gupta's book "Essays on Samkhya and Other Systems of Indian Philosophy."

Dr. Anima Sen Gupta is one of the most brilliant thinkers of India : she is working as a Reader in Philosophy at the Patna University. She is already wellknown as a writer on Samkhya System of Indian Philosophy.

In the present volume, she has collected some of her valuable papers and articles on various topics of Indian and comparative philosophy, published in various journals. A perusal of the book will reveal to the reader, how penetrating, clear and critical approach she has got to Indian thought. She is one of the very few Indian women today who have devoted their lives exclusively to philosophy. Her writings bear the stamp of maturity and sobriety—rarely seen in the writings of young authors.

I appreciate very much her view that "philosophical endeavours should not stop at the intellectual discovery of truth alone : it should inspire a man to reach a state of enlightenment thereby transforming his behaviour and outlook upon the world."

I congratulate the author on this excellent publication. I am sure she will bring out more books on Indian philosophy.

Atreya Niwas  
P. O. Hindu University  
Varanasi

Dr. B. L. Atreya  
(Padmabhusan, Knight Commander :  
Darshanacharya)

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

“Essays on Sāṃkhya and other Systems of Indian Philosophy” is a collection of articles on different systems of Indian Philosophy published in various philosophical journals from time to time.

I received letters of appreciation from kind and generous readers about these contributions. In fact, some of them gave me the idea of bringing out a book knitting together these materials. I sincerely hope that the book in the present form will be of some value to those interested in the study of Indian Philosophy.

In some of the papers, I have tried to show the Indian attitude towards philosophy. The Indian attitude emphasises that philosophical endeavours should not stop at the intellectual discovery of truth alone : it should inspire a man to reach a state of enlightenment thereby transforming his behaviour and outlook upon the world. It seems to me that this “attitude” is a remarkable contribution of India to the world-culture. When the truth is realised, an individual becomes a new man and is able to see new significance and value in life. I have stressed this point in my essay “Philosophy : Indian and Western”. Similarly, I have pleaded for re-orienting the history of Indian Philosophy in another essay on the subject.

If any of the essays in this book delights my readers, I shall feel that my labour has been well-compensated.

*Krishnaghat Quarters  
Patna University, Patna  
November, 1964*

*Anima Sen Gupta*



## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

After publication of the first edition, I wrote a number of articles on various aspects of Indian philosophy. I have thought it desirable to include these articles in the already published edition and bring out an enlarged edition bearing the same title. I have tried to present my original viewpoints on various topics of Indian philosophy in an easy style. I am sure this enlarged edition will be helpful to teachers and students interested in the study of Indian philosophy. The materials have, however, been arranged in two parts.

The appreciation of this book by the press and the scholarly public has exceeded my expectations. I am not anxious for its gaudy get-up. If the articles delight my readers, I shall think that my labour has not gone in vain.

Lastly, my grateful thanks are due to my maternal uncle Mr. M. R. Sen, a seasoned journalist, who in spite of his failing eyesight worked hard to edit the contents of the book and bring out the enlarged edition.

*Krishnaghat Quarters  
P. O. Patna University  
Patna, Bihar, India  
15th August 1977*

Anima Sen Gupta

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## THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CLASSICAL SĀMKNHYA PHILOSOPHY

The Sāṃkhya perhaps represents the oldest formulated philosophical thought in India. It has many affinities with Buddhist and Jaina thoughts, and Vedānta philosophy has assimilated many of its hypotheses.

Life is a ceaseless flow of experience. Therefore, it is expected that a good philosophy which seeks to explain the significance of life in relation to the universe should establish its claim by showing that it is based on a thorough analysis of experience. A penetrating analysis of human experiences is the starting point of the Sāṃkhya philosophy. Its fundamental principles and categories were not merely dogmatically postulated but were discovered after a proper study of consciousness. The epistemological aspect, therefore, assumes an important form in this philosophy. Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the guṇas and their conjunction and disjunction are not mythical but are at the very root of the possibility of experience or knowledge.

### *Theory of the Guṇas*

The distinguishing characteristic of Sāṃkhya is its Guṇa-theory which holds that all mental and material objects of this phenomenal world are the combination in different proportions of the three ultimate reals (*triguṇa*). The conception of these *guṇas* arose undoubtedly as a result of the analysis of experience and its objects. Each fact of experience becomes so by virtue of its relation to consciousness. There is something special in it *i. e.* some sort of intelligibility, by reason of which it easily gets related to the totality of experience of a particular person. Consciousness is revelation and if we are to become conscious of something, that thing must have some characteristic, by virtue of which it can be revealed as being related to consciousness as its object.



When a chair becomes an object of consciousness, it becomes so only because it possesses in itself the capacity of becoming revealed as soon as it comes in contact with consciousness. This capacity cannot be discovered in the so-called qualities of the chair because the qualities can be abstracted and still the object can be conceived as existing and getting related to consciousness without contradiction. This power therefore, exists in the very being of the object and can very well be identified with that (being). Each fact of experience is a being or *sattā* and this constitutes its intelligibility. This intelligibility is the ultimate factor in an object of experience and it is called the *sattva-guṇa*.

The object of experience also possesses certain characteristics like resistance, impenetrability, shape and form which are in fact due to "massiveness" in objects. Therefore, mass or *tamo-guṇa* is another element present in the object. Again, the object undergoes changes. It changes from state to state as well as from form to form. This change or movement is due to the presence of the third principle which is called *rajo-guṇa*. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the three *guṇas* which are the causes of all sorts of experience of a *Puruṣa* or sentient individual. These are objective, ultimate and the irreducible elements of experience. All objects of this world, both mental and physical, are the results of different permutations and combinations of these three ultimate reals. Our thoughts are as much the effects or the modifications of the ultimate reals as the so-called physical things, the only difference being that in the mental sphere the element of *sattva* predominates, whereas in the sphere of the physical universe, *tamas* becomes the dominating element. *Tamas* is present in all our ideas of objects, otherwise these mental products could not assume the forms of their objects in order to make possible the experience of an individual.

The *guṇas* are also said to be feeling substances. Since the whole external world is made up of these three, each object of experience possesses the capacity of producing three

different feelings in our minds, viz., pleasure, pain and delusion or indifference. So from the point of view of knowledge, these three *guṇas* are known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, but from the point of view of feeling they appear as pleasure, pain and delusion. A lovely woman, for instance, excites the feeling of pleasure in her beloved, the feeling of pain in her co-wife, and the feeling of delusion in her disappointed lover. This is because *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* which on the plane of consciousness appear as intelligence-stuff, energy and massiveness, and on the plane of feeling as pleasure, pain and delusion, have themselves been transformed to create that lovely woman. The lovely woman is not merely the assemblage of ideas in some mind as is held by idealistic philosophers, nor is she absolutely distinct from thoughts and feelings as is held by the realistic philosophers. Thought and feeling, matter and the so-called intellectual processes do not lie in two absolutely distinct regions : they have originated from a common source, viz., the *guṇas*. Therefore the establishment of any kind of direct and indirect interaction (as is actually observed in our daily life) is not at all difficult. Thus the correspondence between the mental world and the outer world has been explained by Sāṃkhya on the hypothesis that they represent two allied lines of development from the three *guṇas*.

The creativity of these *guṇas* is not an end in itself. On the contrary, it serves as the only means for the attainment of a Puruṣa's end. Enjoyment and liberation are these ends (*puruṣārthas*) and the *guṇa*-stuff creates the ceaseless flow of modifications and complexities for his enjoyment and liberation. The three *guṇas* create bondage and at the same time nurse in themselves the secret of emancipation. Birth, death, old age and sorrow exist in the world of the three *guṇas*, and to set the soul free, the *guṇas* also display the tendency to withdraw within themselves, thereby dissolving the world-show for the liberated spirit.

The *guṇas* and the Puruṣas are the main principles accepted in Sāṃkhya. Both the categories are equally eternal



but while the *puruṣas* are pure and inactive principles of consciousness, the *guṇas* are the unconscious, ever-changing, dynamic energy of the universe.

### *Prakṛti and the Disturbance of the Prakṛti-state*

When the three *guṇas* are held in a state of equilibrium and there is no manifestation of any characteristic, it is called *Prakṛti*. This *prakṛti*-state of the *guṇas* is absolutely indeterminate, undifferentiated and homogeneous, and it exists as the potential source of energy of the whole world. The three *guṇas* constitute the ground forces, from which the world has come into being. The movement within these *guṇas* either holds these three in a state of equipoise or breaks up their equilibrium just to make them change and develop in the form of this universe. Since the *guṇas* themselves are the *Prakṛti*, they never get merged into something else. There is no other entity that can be admitted as their cause. *Prakṛti* or the three *guṇas* in the state of equilibrium is the root cause of the whole world.

The process of the world always reveals itself as an unending series of causes and effects, and when by following the long line of causation, we arrive at the concept of *Prakṛti*, we find that this ground principle is to be supposed as eternal, uncaused and beyond the region of this phenomenal existence.

The most important characteristic of *Prakṛti* is that it is out and out productive (being an assemblage of the three palpitating reals). Primal Nature is ever undergoing changes. Being is not the only irreducible ultimate of experience. Movement or becoming is also another incontrovertible principle of experience and this is *Prakṛti* or *Triguṇa*. The material world is evolved out of *Prakṛti* when there is a disturbance in the *guṇa*-equilibrium. This disturbance is due to the union of *Prakṛti* with the inactive 'mind' (*cit*) whose purpose is served by the evolution of Nature. Nature is no

doubt unconscious and unintelligent, still there is some inherent (unconscious) teleology in the three *guṇas*, due to which they produce this world. This inherent teleology means the disposition of unknowingly serving the purposes of the 'enjoyment' and 'liberation' of a *Puruṣa*. Thus the movement of nature for the production of the world is in a manner controlled and influenced by the transcendental *Puruṣa*. Just as the unintelligent milk flows from the udders of the cow for the nourishment of the calf, so it is the function of unconscious nature to liberate the souls from the sorrows and sufferings of the world. This unconscious teleology is an important hypothesis, by which the classical *Sāṃkhya* seeks to explain the creation of this well-ordered universe by an unconscious *Prakṛti*, even in the absence of any active guidance from *Puruṣa*.

### *Puruṣa and its Union with Prakṛti*

All the movements of *Prakṛti* are said to be for the experiences and liberation of *Puruṣa*, so the consideration of *Puruṣa*'s nature and its relation to *Prakṛti* is an important problem for *Sāṃkhya*. *Prakṛti* stands for the unconscious dynamic principle that undergoes changes and transformations for the creation of the empirical world. Although the contents of consciousness always change and become different, consciousness as the principle of illumination and revelation remains always the same. So there are not merely changes and transformations here : there is also the permanent principle of consciousness which manifests all these passing phenomena of the world. This eternal principle is the *Puruṣa*. An unconscious Nature alone cannot produce a world which seems to be full of meaning and purpose. Hence at the root of this world, we have to infer the existence of spirit which somehow influences *Prakṛti* in the process of evolution. *Puruṣa* is pure consciousness and as such it is changeless and infinite. It is a transcendental principle and therefore its real nature *per se* is non-apprehensible by experience.



The Sāṃkhya seeks to prove the existence of the soul on the ground that as the controller and enjoyer of the world of composite things, some intelligent being must exist and that this intelligent being must not be of the nature of pleasure, pain and indifference. The world process, therefore, is not moving and developing aimlessly in a capricious manner : on the contrary, there is Puruṣa or pure consciousness which, though inactive, yet through reflection, co-ordinates, synthesises and gives meaning to all worldly experiences. Again, Prakṛti is unconscious and therefore the release striven for must relate to a principle other than Nature. This principle is Puruṣa. When this Puruṣa through beginningless ignorance, identifies itself with Prakṛti, the world comes into being. Therefore, the establishment of the union of Prakṛti with Puruṣa becomes a very important problem for the classical Sāṃkhya which seeks to solve the problem of this union between the two rigidly distinct principles of spirit and nature through its theory of reflection. According to this system, *buddhi* or intelligence is an intermediate link between these two opposite principles. *Buddhi* partakes of the nature of both (being an evolute of nature and being essentially *sāttvika* in character). It serves as the reflecting agent, although unspiritual and unconscious in essence. The notion of a person or of an experiencer arises when the *cit* is reflected in the *buddhi*. The actual enjoyer of the worldly pleasures and pains is the empirical ego formed by the reflection of consciousness in *buddhi*, united with its own conceptual determinations. But due to the presence of transcendental illusion in *buddhi* from beginningless time, the various experiences of the fictitious self (intelligised *buddhi*) are owned by the real self, as it were, and they appear as the experiences of the Puruṣa. This illusion is regarded as the bondage of the Puruṣa. The fictitious and artificial union between spirit and nature causes a commotion or a dislocation of Prakṛti from the state of equipoise, as a result of which the evolution of different categories in their own graduated series immediately starts in

the collocation of the *guṇa* reals. All objects of this world are the creations of these moving *guṇas* and consequently each moment, every object of the finite universe is undergoing changes. The potential is thus becoming the actual in course of such transformation. This transition from the potential to the actual is what is known as causal transformation.

### *Causation*

Regarding the relation of cause and effect, the Sāṃkhya holds that before actual production, the effect exists in the cause in the form of potential energy, due to certain obstacles which prevent its manifestation, but as soon as the barriers are removed, the energy gets a free passage and produces the necessary transformation known as the effect. Creation is only the process of transforming the implicit into the explicit form. All things remain in potential form in Prakṛti before creation and when the *guṇas* are thrown out of balance, Prakṛti gradually changes into different categories of the universe. Although this law of causation reveals to us a continuous process of becoming, changes do not hang in the air. Becoming is the becoming of some dynamic force which, though essentially mutative, is still the underlying support of all changes and mutations.

### *Sāṃkhya Atheism*

Sāṃkhya recognises the existence of two principles, static and dynamic, for building up a comprehensive doctrine for explaining the being and becoming of the whole universe. The inherent teleology in Prakṛti demands that creation should proceed in a manner that will be beneficial to Puruṣa, either in the direction of enjoyment or in the direction of salvation. The purpose of the Puruṣa passively guides and controls all the activities of the *guṇas* and so the idea of God as the creator of the universe is not needed.

The fundamental doctrine of the classical Sāṃkhya is the dualism of Puruṣa and Prakṛti. These two are supposed



to be entirely distinct and independent, and no attempt is made to derive them from a higher principle or God. The apparent union between Spirit and Nature (due to *avidyā* or ignorance) is the cause of *samsāra* or the world process. All our misery is due to ignorance. *Buddhi* and *Puruṣa* are distinct and different but through ignorance, a seeming unity between the two is wrongly established by us, as a result of which, sorrows and sufferings which really belong to *buddhi*, seem to follow us from birth to birth. It is therefore necessary to understand the distinction between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. We should form in *buddhi* the true conception of the nature of *Puruṣa* and then with the help of this saving knowledge, we shall be able to attain liberation from the miseries of the world.

### *The Concept of Liberation*

The classical Sāṃkhya is of opinion that so long as we remain on the empirical level only, we cannot enjoy unmixed and pure happiness. This is the most important truth regarding our life on earth. So if we are to rise above sorrowful existence, we must first of all realise that all worldly pleasures lead to sorrow and that no worldly means can remove for ever the suffering of this mundane life.

Change is in *Prakṛti* alone and it is the body that grows old and dies. The spirit is ever free and is entirely distinct from Nature. When *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* will be perfectly discriminated from each other through the purification of *buddhi*, sorrows and sufferings of life will come to an end. Thus by freeing itself from the sense of its false identity with *Prakṛti*, *Puruṣa* attains liberation and this liberation is the highest goal of human life.

---

## SAMKHYA IN THE MAHABHARATA

The Sāṃkhya, one of the oldest philosophical enquiries of India, has been shaped and re-shaped in different ages. Materials available for the study of Sāṃkhya are scattered in various works like the Mahābhārata, the Gītā, the Purāṇas etc. In this article I will particularly refer to the lucid analysis of Sāṃkhya concepts as expounded in the Mahābhārata. Of course, the ideas are scattered and diversely explained and the task of spinning out only one coherent system of thought is fraught with risks. Both theistic and atheistic versions of the Sāṃkhya system can be gathered from the Mahābhārata without much strain and twist. The most common view of Sāṃkhya that has been frankly and openly admitted in several chapters of the *Śānti Parva* of the Mahābhārata is, however theistic and monistic; although an atheistic tendency, too, represented by the teachings of *Pañcaśikhā* boldly hovers round this theistic conception.

### THEISTIC ACCOUNT :

#### *Puruṣa, Prakṛti and the Puruṣottama*

The existence of a *puruṣottama* (the highest spiritual being) as the ultimate reality is too apparent in the Mahābhārata; and *puruṣa* (individual self) and *prakṛti*—the spirituality and physico-mentality—are but phases of this highest Lord.

*Prakṛti* is no doubt endowed with the dynamic power of evolving and dissolving this lovely universe; but she does not, of her own accord, perform this wonderful function. She is fully under the influence of One Spiritual principle, who is her Lord or Master (*Triguṇādhīpa*): and it is this Lord who makes her play with her own creative powers and energy. This spiritual principle is, therefore, the highest reality that transcends and includes both *prakṛti* and individual *puruṣa*.



This is the principle of consciousness that illumines and supports everything. This is the *bodha* and the *bodhanīya* : (Jīva and Īśvara) the thinker and the thought : the enjoyer and the enjoyed : the smeller and the smelt : one who touches and the touched ; the seer and the seen : the hearer and the heard and the knower and the known. In other words, it is the supreme principle of the whole universe, because *pradhāna* which is known as the source of *mahat* etc. is included in this eternal being. (The Mahābhārata ; Śānti-parva 351, 17-18).

The highest principle has no rival or opponent. Whenever duality is spoken of, it refers in all contents to the duality between *sattva* and *kṣetrajña* (perceiving self) and not between the *puruṣottama* and any other principle. Materiality and spirituality seem to become the lower and the higher phases of the highest being, and these two phases, though different in nature, are still in a beginningless association because such a union is necessary for the creation and maintenance of this world. Nature is the dynamic principle that brings into existence all things and beings of this world. The innumerable ripples and rhythms of worldly life, its rugged rocks and green valleys : its pleasures and pains : flowers and thorns—all are due to this moving and palpitating power, often termed as nature or *prakṛti*. Pure individual consciousness that appears as the knower of this worldly existence is not an active principle. Thus we gather from the valuable teachings of the Mahābhārata, the idea that nature creates everything, but it does so only under the control of the highest spiritual existence. (Ibid. 314-12). The distinction of spirit as inactive and Nature as active is recognised in the great epic of India : but this duality is transcended in the final state of release when *kṣetrajña*, the 25th principle, becomes emancipated from the clutches of the *guṇas* by its becoming one with the absolutely supreme spirit or the 26th principle which is the final support of all. (The Mahābhārata : Śānti-parva : 308, 9-13).

*The Kṣetra : the Kṣetrajñā and their Duality*

Duality or distinction is to be maintained between the 24 categories of Nature and the 25th principle which is clearly and aptly spoken of as *kṣetrajñā* or the perceiving consciousness. The 24 categories, including *avyakta*, constitute the physico-mental conglomeration known as the *kṣetra* (field) and the individual soul that resides inside this whole is known as the *adhiṣṭhātā* or the knower of the field and this is the principle that has been numbered as the 25th one. *Avyakta* or *prakṛti* is also called *sattva* or *Īśvara*, (The Mahābhārata : Śānti-Pārva : 306—41), since this is the source of all originations and creation. The 25th principle is different from nature and its categories : but it is not the highest principle as it has been distinctly stated in the Mahābhārata that this 25th principle or the *kṣetrajñā* becomes united with the 26th principle—its source at the time of release or *kaivalya*. The *kṣetrajñā* stands for the perceiving self or the living principle of self within the mind-body complex in the Mahābhārata, as there are reasons in favour of this contention.

It has already been stated above that the 25th principle is called *kṣetrajña* as it knows the *kṣetra*. In other words, the 25th principle has been identified with the *kṣetrajñā*. It is in the state of bondage alone that the encased self i.e., the 25th one fails to realise its non-distinction from the 26th principle. It falsely boasts of its being the highest category through ignorance. But when it becomes the *kevalī*, it perceives its unity with the 26th principle. Nilkantha, too, while explaining the passage *kṣetrajñāpi—yadā tāta-tāt kṣetre sampralīyate*—has identified *kṣetrajñā* with the 25th principle. If this principle attains *kaivalya* and thereby becomes merged in the highest category, it cannot refer to any other being except the individual self within the mindbody system.

While discussing the points of distinction between *sattva* and *kṣetrajñā*, it has been stated that the latter is without any



support or substratum ; but that should not be accepted as a justifiable ground for interpreting *kṣetrajñā* as some divine personality other than so many witnessing selves possessing different mind-body complexes. *Kṣetrajñā*, being the principle of consciousness, is identical with the pure, stainless, super-sensible consciousness, which has been spoken of as the supreme *puruṣa*. It has been clearly stated in the *Mabhābhārata* that just as one fire becomes many, one sun is the source of all light and the same air blows in different directions ; in the same way one supreme self assumes the forms of so many selves, being focussed through different bodies. Now, if this living principle of consciousness is nothing but a spark of the supreme self, getting entangled in the meshes, woven by *prakṛti*, then there is no harm in characterising it as a self-reliant principle—which indeed it is—if viewed properly from a correct angle of vision. It is the universal consciousness—only limited by *antaḥkāraṇa* to a particular individual and thus individualised by it.

This perceiving self is in fact different from the mind-body complex with which it gets identified through ignorance. The epic transfers all activities to *sattva* or nature and makes the self entirely inactive. *Prakṛti* is unconscious, but *kṣetrajñā* is just the opposite. The self simply perceives whatever is produced by nature or *sattva*. Though radically distinct, yet these two principles are related together like fish and water or fly and fig-leaf. It is because of this relation and also under the spell of ignorance that the spirit identifies itself with nature and considers itself as the active and creative principle. The wants, appetites, desires and passions which really belong to *antaḥkāraṇa* are owned by the spirit as parts and parcels to itself. In other words, due to complete self-forgetfulness, the spirit becomes submerged in *prakṛti* and enjoys and suffers worldly pleasures and pains, i.e. bondage. It may be mentioned here that in our discussion, the word *sattva* is taken in the sense of *prakṛti* and not in the sense of *buddhi*, whenever it has

been contrasted with the *kṣetrajñā*. Of course, among the three *guṇas*, it is *sattva* in the *buddhi* that catches the reflection of pure consciousness and thereby creates the false impression of identity. Still, *buddhi*, being itself the result of permutation and combination of the three *guṇas* presupposes a previous existence of the three *guṇas* or *prakṛti* in contact with the spirit. It is not the ultimate category although it is the first evolute from which all other categories have evolved. So, while *kṣetrajñā* refers to the individual witnessing self, *sattva* refers to the psycho-physical substrate or *prakṛti*. Moreover, in chapter 306 of *Śānti-parva*, *prakṛti* has actually been described as *sattva*.

### *The Guṇas*

*Prakṛti* has been declared to consist of the three *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—and all objects of this world are spoken of as their products. These are also the three factors that act like coverings in relation to *puruṣa* and due to the existence of these *guṇas*, the soul suffers delusion and misery. It is only by transcending all the *guṇas* that one can attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death. But the *Mahābhārata* does not give us any clear and definite idea regarding the nature of these three *guṇas*. They are generally referred to as representing different mental states—good, bad and indifferent. Living beings are also divided on this ground into *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*. Those who have predominance of *sattva* in them are born in a higher world : those who are under the influence of *rajas* are born as man and those who have a predominant element of *tamas* are born as animals.

### *Buddhi or Intelligence Stuff*

*Buddhi* has been given a very prominent place in the epic philosophy where it has been clearly stated that the whole universe is shot through and through with the *buddhi* and that all materials both merge and emerge from this very cosmic principle : (The *Mahābhārata* : *Śānti-parva* : 194,17-18).



The epic has often given in the doctrine of the development of the *Bhautika* elements of the universe from *bhūtātman* and *bhūtakṛt*. In our opinion there is justifiable ground for accepting the term *bhūtātman*, as standing for *buddhi*—the great germ of the whole world. If *buddhi* is the main source from which the whole creation has sprung up, then it is only just and reasonable to hold that the five elements have also originated from this single principle. *Ātmā* in *bhūtātmā* does not seem to imply any spiritual entity like self or God. It refers to *buddhi*—the first category—without which the world could not have been brought into existence. Since it is the main principle of creation, it has been described as the *ātmā* of all *bhūtas*. In chapter 285 of Śānti parva, we come across the word *bhūtakṛt* which, too, may justifiably be regarded as meaning the intelligence-stuff, i.e. the first born category of Nature. But *buddhi* is not treated as the only source of these *bhautika* elements in the Mahābhārata. There are other suggestions, too, which trace the development of the elements from the Absolute Being or from the mind, although their commonly-held source is *ahamkāra*.

### *The Categories*

In the epic philosophy, too, the various parts of the empirical world are derived from nature ; but on this point there prevails a number of views with marked variations among themselves. Thus, in one version there are five senses, mind, intellect and spirit as *kṣetrajñā* : in another the spirit is admitted as the ninth element ; as *chitta* a new element has been added to the group. In chapter 306 of Śānti-parva, however, we find an enumeration of 8 *prakṛtis* together with five organs of sensation—the five of action, mind and the five objects (16 *vikārās*). These are almost similar to categories enumerated in the classical Sāṃkhya : the important difference being the omission of the term *tanmātra* in the philosophy of this great epic. Again, in chapter 310 it is stated that according to the Sāṃkhya system, *mahat* first of all arises

from nature : from *mahat* arises *ahamkāra* : from *ahamkāra* originates the mind and from the mind the five elements come into being.

### *Empirical Plurality and Transcendental Unity of the Souls*

The souls, so long as they are in the union with nature, are many in number : but as soon as they realise their distinction from nature they abandon *prakṛti*. They then enter into the Supreme Spirit—the final merging ground of all multiplicity and difference. It has been repeatedly stated in the Mahābhārata that the individual *puruṣas* are many and that they can be relieved of their burden of sufferings by their abandonment of *prakṛti* and its evolutes. This abandonment, of course does not mean the annihilation of *prakṛti*. It simply refers to the realisation of his own nature by an individual *puruṣa* and the consequent transcendence of *prakṛti* by him. In this state, therefore, he sees his difference from the psychophysical structure : and nature too fails to affect him in good or bad manner. In this respect there is similarity between the theistic view of the Mahābhārata and the classical view.

### *The Concept of Time*

Time occupies an important place in the epic. Individuals are born in different bodies due to their accumulated merits and demerits under the influence of time. Time as a category regulates and determines to a certain extent the destiny of living beings. In the dialogue between Asitadevala and Nārada (Śānti. Ch. 274) eight kinds of *bhūtas* are mentioned such as *bhāva*, *abhāva*, *kāla*, *pr̥thivi*, *apas*, *vāyu*, *ākāśa* and *tejas* : and *kālā* is spoken of as that which being impelled by *bhāva* brings into existence all *bhūtas* out of the five elements : viz. earth, air, water, wind and light. The senses themselves are not the knowers : but produce knowledge for the *kṣetrajña*. Higher than the senses is *citta*,

superior to this is *manas*, higher than *manas* is *buddhi* and the highest of all is the spiritual principle.

### Findings

From the above discussion it is clear that the Mahābhārata gives us a more thorough exposition of the theistic sāmkhya than what we gather from the study of the upaniṣads. The epic explains in detail the distinction between *kṣetrajñā* and nature : and this perceiving self is set over against the 24 categories of *prakṛti* constituting the sphere of empirical knowledge. The perceiving self or the transcendental ego is not the real doer and enjoyer. It is simply the pure and spectator-like consciousness that forms the background of our empirical existence. In the epic philosophy, this transcendental ego has no doubt been regarded as different from the psychophysical organism : but in order to avoid dualism and atheism, both of them are made to hang on the 26th principle which is the final abode of the whole creation. Here the influence of the upaniṣadic doctrine is clearly visible as the upaniṣads also make *jivātman* (individual soul) independent of Nature only, while maintaining all through the view that both of them are rooted in the Brahman. It is, therefore, understandable from the facts mentioned above, how through different handling in diverse periods, this transcendental ego assumed the status of the transcendental *puruṣa* of the classical sāmkhya, without the patronage of the 26th principle namely the *puruṣottama* (The ultimate reality which is all inclusive). Different categories of nature are also more fully analysed and the order of their development is also more clearly explained in the epic—although there is variation from the classical sāmkhya in this respect. The five elements are not always derived from *ahamkāra* and different views are given regarding the development of the categories. The sāmkhya ideas are thus in the process of formation, side by side with the other orthodox systems. In this manner, a definite advance from the Upaniṣadic state so far as systematisation of



materials is concerned is visible in the epic philosophy. The Mahābhārata definitely says that all sufferings are due to the false identification of *prakṛti* and *kṣetrajña* and that the final liberation will be effected from a recognition of the distinction between spirit and matter. The sāmkhya in the epic recognises a plurality of souls only in the empirical sphere. The souls are many so long as they are in union with nature ; but as soon as they become enlightened about their own distinction from *prakṛti*, they at once return to the 26th principle of *puruṣottama*. The epic philosophy is thus definitely theistic in its general outlook and the elements of sāmkhya are mostly pressed into the service of this trend of thought. The Mahābhārata describes the philosophies of sāmkhya and Yoga as two eternal ancient systems taught by Kapila and Hiraṇyagarbha respectively and they were then not separated. The sāmkhya is the highest truth with a belief in God as the 26th principle of the universe.

#### *Teachings of Pañcaśikha on Atheistic line*

The view of *Pañcaśikha* (mentioned as the disciple of Āsuri) is, however, different from this theistic conception which is so prominent in the Mahābhārata. According to him, the highest reality is not the *puruṣottama* or God, transcending and absorbing both spirit and matter. It is rather a unified category of *avyakta* and *puruṣa* or in the words of Dr. S. N. Das Gupta : 'it is *avyakta* in the state of *puruṣa*. (History of Indian Philosophy : Vol. I : page 216). It is due in all cases to the conglomerated association of our body, mind and the element of *cetas* with the self. *Cetas* is the psychical element which is to be combined with physical elements to generate consciousness in the self...Consciousness arises from the unification of these psycho-physical elements with the self, and these elements are the constituents of *avyakta*—the ultimate ground of this objective world. The collective whole of the elements is called the *kṣetra* and the self that resides in the mind is called the *kṣetrajña*. The

existence of the self is admissible, as otherwise we shall have to believe that all ceases with death, which is not really true. Again in the absence of a postulate of self, it will be difficult for us to give a rational explanation of duties and the sense of moral responsibility. To prove his point of view, *Pañcaśikha* has introduced a critical discussion on the buddhist and the *lokāyata* views both of which deny the existence of a permanent self. Consciousness can never be produced from a combination of different physical elements only to perform the functions of life and its various processes. If consciousness is regarded as a quality of the body only, then we are in a fix to understand why it vanishes altogether from a dead body which is still a conglomeration of all *bhautika* elements. That which residing in the body, the body lives and departing from the body, it dies, must be different and other than the mere physical and elemental combination. This, therefore, is the soul. The *lokāyatas* do believe in the existence of deities who can be propitiated for the removal of cold and heat etc. Now, these deities cannot be mere elemental conglomerations, since in that case they will be mortal like all other worldly things. So, the permanent soul does exist as the undeniable principle of life and all living processes. Further, formless consciousness cannot spring forth from elements having forms, as this will contradict our experiences. Nor can we think of the self as a stream of passing mental states, as in that case the results of A's action will be enjoyed by B and not by A who has performed those actions. Hence, as permanent upholder of consciousness, we are forced to believe in the existence of an abiding self, which truly constitutes the spiritual basis of life and experience. The state of release is, however, described as being identical with that when all rivers completely lose themselves in the ocean. (The Mahābhārata : Śānti Parva : 219-42) This is a state of pure neutrality which cannot be described in terms of the usual qualifying adjectives. For that reason *Pañcaśikha* says that there is neither ultimate destruction, nor ultimate reality

of a determinate type. The *mokṣa*-state is indefinable. It cannot be described as a state of consciousness, since consciousness is not the essence of the soul.

The three *guṇas* are also spoken of : but *guṇas* are as usual referred to signify the good and bad qualities of the mind. The elements become conglomerated naturally and there is no need for any prime mover or God. The various organs of sensation and action with their objects, are also elaborately discussed by *Pañcaśikha*. The elements of material bodies remain together in a collective whole by their nature and they are separated also in the same manner. One who confuses this conglomeration of body-mind with the soul, suffers misfortunes and misery and is never released from bondage. Since this conglomeration is not the self, any attachment to this as 'I' and 'mine' is false.

A similar view is also given in the Śānti Parvan (203) in which the self, apart from the body, is described as imperceptible on account of its non-manifesting character like the moon of the new moonday. In other words, the self in itself, is characterless and it acquires characteristics only when it becomes associated with the body. This is also the view of *Pañcaśikha* on the nature of the self. In the state of release the soul becomes *alinga* and unmanifest. *Pañcaśikha's* teaching may be regarded as a continuation of the idea of the Bṛhad Upaniṣad where it is stated by Yājñā-valkya that after death there is no consciousness. Just as a lump of salt dissolved into water, is completely lost in it and it is not possible to detect it : yet wheresoever you may take any part of it, it invariably tastes salty : so this great endless limitless being is solidified thought. Arising from those elements, it is destroyed after death and there is no consciousness after death. (Bṛhad Upaniṣad—2. 4. 12). The passage is, indeed very obscure and even Maitreyi, his wife, took it in the sense that after death there could be no consciousness. *Pañcaśikha*, has also tried to establish his



doctrine in the same manner. In his opinion salvation means complete destruction of all positive characteristics including consciousness.

Consciousness arises from the conglomeration of elements and is destroyed along with them. At death, there is no consciousness. This atheistic teaching of *Pañcaśikha* later on has found a more detailed and logical development in the Sāmkhya of Caraka : most probably this trend of thought, by gradually gathering strength, has ultimately developed into the traditional atheistic sāmkhya of Īśvarakrishna.



## VACASPATI AND VIJÑĀNA BHIKṢU ON THE BHOKTRBHAVA OF PURUṢA

In this article I propose to consider critically the interpretations offered by Vācaspati Miśra and Vijñāna Bhikṣu in regard to the Bhoktrbhāva of Puruṣa mentioned explicitly in the fourth argument of the seventeenth Kārika of the *Sāmkhya Kārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa.

The philosophy of Sāmkhya is not merely a dualistic system : it is also a rationalistic and realistic metaphysics, because it mainly depends on logical analysis and argumentation at every step. Being an orthodox system, it believes in the authority of the Vedas. But it has not made any attempt to justify any of its views by appealing to the revealed texts.

The Sāmkhya arguments for the existence of puruṣa are based on Logic and Reason and they are quite in harmony with the dualistic and realistic position of the classical Sāmkhya.

Critics have expressed doubt about the applicability of the fourth argument to prove the existence of puruṣa. It is argued that if puruṣa is by nature neutral and indifferent to all worldly happenings, then how can we ascribe bhoktrbhāva to puruṣa ? Both Vācaspati and Vijñāna Bhikṣu have tried to solve this riddle in a manner which will not be incompatible with the unaffected nature of puruṣa.

We should remember that the seventeenth kārikā has been employed by the author of the *Sāmkhya-kārikā* to prove only the existence of puruṣa and not its indifference and neutrality. This puruṣa is one that has been caught in the snare of prakṛti. It is a subject that reveals naturally any

object that happens to be in its proximity. [This *viṣaya-sambandha*, however, does not prove that *puruṣa* is not indifferent. On the contrary it is admitted that consciousness as a revealing principle only (*Prakāśātmaka Caitanya*) cannot but be neutral]. Perception of the visible world is not possible in the case of pure matter : nor is it possible in the case of pure Spirit. It is only the seemingly unified category of Spirit and matter (*Jīva-puruṣa*) that can be the perceiver of the *Dṛśya* through modifications of the intellect.

Accordingly, to Vācaspati *bhokṛbhāva* of such a *jīva-puruṣa* refers to its capacity of perceiving the world in a manner as if the latter has been imaged in its own *ṛttis*. In the *Tattvavaiśārādī*, Vācaspati has introduced his unique conception of *cicchāyā* with a view to explaining the *bhoga* or bondage of *puruṣa*. Whether this *cicchāyā* refers to a unique relation or to simple reflection of *cit* in *buddhi* has not been clearly indicated. For the purpose of this paper, we shall, however, be using the term '*cicchāyā*' to signify the reflection of consciousness in *buddhi* although in practical life we do admit a distinction between *chāyā* and *pratibimba*. In the opinion of Vācaspati Miśra, due to *Sannidhāna*, a reflection of consciousness is caught in the *buddhi* by virtue of which all *buddhi-ṛttis* get apparently changed into consciousness ; and this apparent change in the character of *ṛttis* gives rise to a sense of false identity between *puruṣa* and *buddhi*. It is on account of this feeling of false unity that the *buddhi-ṛttis* are understood by the *aviveki* *puruṣa* as parts and parcels of its own nature. It is this false appropriation that has been described as the *bhokṛbhāva* of *puruṣa*.<sup>1</sup> Since the consciousness of *puruṣa* is the cause of manifestation of the modifications of *buddhi* in the waking state, it seems as if *puruṣa* is non-different from the intellect and there is only one principle, not two. This fact has been mentioned by Pañcaśikhāchārya in his famous sūtra *Ekameva darśanam, khyātireva darśanam*.

1. *Tattvavaiśārādī*, Chapter 1-4.



Although *puruṣa caitanya* is radically different from the intellect, the two are fused together intimately so as to give rise to a false sense of oneness which hides the real truth.

While explaining *sannidhāna*, Vācaspati has said that this does not mean any form of spatial or temporal contact between *puruṣa* and *buddhi*. Rather it implies a special kind of capability or *yogyatā* on the part of *puruṣa* to enlighten the states and the processes of *buddhi*, as a result of which, in the state of ignorance a false sense of ownership arises in the spirit. Hence the spirit appears as the *pramātā*, *bhoktā* etc.<sup>1</sup>

Vācaspati's view has been criticised by Vijñāna Bhikṣu on the ground that mere *cicchāyā* in *buddhi* is not potent enough to account for the world-sense of the real *puruṣa*. If *buddhi* is only intelligised by the single reflection of consciousness in it and there is not the double reflection of the *buddhivṛttis* in Spirit, then, truly speaking, there can only be a relation between the image of *puruṣa* and *buddhi* and not between *buddhi* and real *puruṣa*. In such circumstances, intelligised *buddhi* plays the part of both the revealer and the revealed and as such this theory commits the fallacy of accepting one and the same category as both *kartā* and *karma*. Further, if *yogyatā* is believed to constitute the nature of *puruṣa*, it will continue even in the state of emancipation and, therefore, *puruṣa*'s experience will never come to an end. Consequently, emancipation will become meaningless. Hence, Vijñāna Bhikṣu gives us his theory of double reflection which explains the *bhoktrbhāva* of *jīva-puruṣa* in a better manner. According to this view, *buddhi*, first of all, reflects the consciousness of *puruṣa* and becomes intelligised with the result that the inherent *ahmkāra* of *buddhi* is falsely appropriated by the self. After that, the modification of the intelligised *buddhi* are reflected back in the spiritual principle so as to reveal the objects (the forms of which have been caught in

the *buddhi* states) as objects of enjoyment of an experiencing person. Here an intimate relation is established between *buddhi* and real *puruṣa* through reflection of *buddhi-vṛttis* in the self.

Just as the eye receives colour only and not any other quality, in the same manner, *puruṣa* receives in itself only the reflection of the modifications of *buddhi*. Real enjoyment in the forms of various psychological changes caused by actual spatio-temporal contact of the intellect with various worldly objects belongs to the intellect and not to the real self. It is the intellect that can be changed into the form of a jar and also into the form of intelligence : but consciousness cannot be changed in any manner. It can only reflect in itself intellectual modifications due to its own illuminating nature.

The reflection of consciousness in intellect, however, is incapable of revealing *buddhi-vṛttis* through which objects are manifested and enjoyed, because the image of consciousness formed in the *buddhi* is not potent enough to cause enjoyment of objects just as superimposed fire is not suitable for cooking food. Further, in the opinion of Bhikṣu, this type of double reflection does not affect the unchangeable character of spirit because change always means creation of new qualities : and no new quality is generated in the soul as a result of its union with *buddhi* through reflection.

From the above discussion, therefore, it would appear that according to Bhikṣu, a full fledged experiencer emerges when *cit* is reflected in the *buddhi* and the apparently intelligised *buddhi* and its modifications are reflected back in the *puruṣa*. It is due to this reflection of the intellectual modifications in spirit that the false sense of ownership arises easily in the self as a result of which there happens to be '*ekamevadarśanam, khyātireva darśanam*' on the part of *puruṣa*.

Now, if we reflect on these interpretations offered by the two great commentators of the classical Sāṃkhya, we find

that both the views can be accepted with equal cogency as explanations of the *bhokṛbhāva* of *puruṣa*. Vācaspati's interpretation though severely criticised by Bhikṣu, is, in fact, not less satisfactory than his own view. We shall be able to realize the merit of Vācaspati's view provided we succeed in catching the real spirit of his brief exposition. His view is quite in keeping with his *advaita* position and there is no logical error even from the point of view of the dualistic *Sāṃkhya*. The concept of *yogyatā* which Vācaspati has made use of in explaining the enjoyment of *puruṣa*, does not really involve any logical contradiction, if understood in its proper spirit. *Yogyatā*, in fact, implies capability inherent in the nature of the self for (1) manifesting and also for (2) appropriating through *aviveka* all modifications of *buddhi* caused by the contact of the latter with various worldly objects. That the self is ever fit for manifesting everything that comes in its way will be denied by nobody. Difficulty arises in respect of the self's capability for participating in the benefits offered by the intellect.

We should remember that this participation is logically possible due to the fact that the self is a revealing principle and in actual active state, this participation is caused by the false idea of ownership generated by *aviveka*. In fact, the Spirit's participation in worldly experience is nothing but a perverted manifestation of the visible world due to existence of ignorance in the form of a great principle of Confusion. So, enjoyment of *puruṣa* in the form of perception, implies truly that in the inactive state *aviveka* leads to the connecting of the spirit with the intellect which, in its turn, leads to the idea of ownership (in the spirit) from which arises immediately the experience of pleasures and pains. *Dṛśya* or the visible objectivity seems to form the *sva* of *puruṣa* so long as it remains entangled in the creative activities of *prakṛti*. Hence, *yogyatā* (for owning the experiences of pleasures and pains) becomes effective only when the self remains under the spell of ignorance. In that miserable condition of the self,

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mere *sannidhi* is potent enough to cause intelligisation of all that has been placed in the proximity of the *puruṣa*. Then, due to its inherent capability or *yogyatā*, assisted by ignorance, the spirit comes to recognize all intelligised *buddhivṛttis* as parts and parcels of its nature. This capability or *yogyatā* (being the nature of *puruṣa*) does not exist as a quality to be lost in the state of liberation. Even in the state of final liberation, this fitness exists in the self, but in the absence of the medium (i.e. the intellect) through which objects are to be received, there is no revelation of objects of sense. Further, due to the total annihilation of *aviveka*, the question of having the feeling of ownership of experience on the part of the spirit does not arise at all. To *jīvan-mukta* *puruṣa* who has succeeded in removing totally the veil of *aviveka*, *prakṛti* appears as wholly different from and inferior to *puruṣa*. There will, no doubt, be the world-sense through the operation of *buddhivṛttis* in the active state of his worldly existence pending exhaustion of all his *prārabdha karma*. Still in his case there will no longer be "*ekmeva darśanam*", even though *yogyatā* will be present, (because the latter causes confused perception only when it is assisted by *aviveka*). In the transcendental sphere, *yogyatā* exists only as the revealing capacity of *puruṣa*: but in the phenomenal sphere, the same revealing capacity vitiated by ignorance gives rise to a confused perception as a result of which the fictitious idea of ownership of world-experience arises in the spirit.'

*Vijñāna Bhikṣu* has not accepted either of these two concepts (*sannidhi* and *yogyatā*) to explain the relation of *puruṣa* and *buddhi*. According to him, a more satisfactory explanation can be offered by us, if we accept the theory of double reflection. Mere *cicchāyā* (reflection of consciousness) in the intellect is not suitable enough for providing the *puruṣa* with multi-coloured world-sense. For this purpose, all intelligised *buddhivṛttis* should be reflected back in the spirit. It is only in such a plight of *puruṣa* that *aviveka* is capable of generating in it the false idea of the ownership of *buddhivṛttis* as its *sva*

i.e. as its own modifications. In the state of final liberation due to the absence of both ignorance and intellectual modifications, there will neither be the operation of double reflection nor the confused perception of the intellectual concepts as the self's own possession. In the Jīvanmukta condition also, due to the total removal of *aviveka*, there will no longer be *abheda-grahana* and consequently, there will no more be the confused perception of the two as one.

Vācaspati being the propounder of the *Bhāmati prasthāna* of the advāita Vedānta, has not accepted the *bimba-pratibimba-vāda* of the *vivaraṇa-school*: perhaps due to this fact, in his interpretation of the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* and *yoga-sūtra*, he has not adopted the *bimba-pratibimba* method for the purpose of explaining the relation between *puruṣa* and *buddhi*. In his writings, he has used the word *cicchāyā* to refer to the relation of *cit* to intellect. That intelligisation of *buddhi* together with *aviveka* (the assisting condition) is necessary for causing the confused perception of *puruṣa*, has been admitted both by Vācaspati and Vijñāna Bhikṣu. While Vācaspati has mentioned *aviveka* as the sole assisting condition for causing false identity of *puruṣa* with intellect, Vijñāna Bhikṣu has stated a third condition in the form of the reflection of the intelligised *buddhivṛttis* in spirit.

Vācaspati has no doubt tried his best to keep unimpaired the dualistic and realistic position of the Sāṃkhya by recognizing the reality of *yogyatā* and *sannidhi*: still due to his advaitic bent of mind he has explained bondage, liberation and the relation between the soul and the world as being due solely to ignorance or *aviveka* (just as in the advaita-Vedānta of Saṃkara, all these are explained as being due solely to the operation of *māyā*) but Bhikṣu, by admitting the relation of double reflection between *puruṣa* and *buddhi* in addition to ignorance, has succeeded more in providing us with a truly realistic explanation of the bondage and liberation of *puruṣa*. Otherwise, for simple understanding of the true meaning of self's enjoyment, both the theories are equally helpful to the readers.

## IN DEFENCE OF THE SĀṆKHYA PURUṢA AND ITS MULTIPLICITY

The philosophy of Sāṅkhya is not merely a dualistic system ; it is also a rationalistic and realistic metaphysics, because it mainly relies on logical analysis and argumentation at every step. As an *āstika darśana*, it believes in the authority of the Vedas ; but it has never made any attempt anywhere to justify any of its views by an appeal to the revealed texts.

The Sāṅkhya arguments for the existence of self and also for the establishment of its numerical plurality are based on logic and reason. The logical procedure followed in this respect does not seem to involve any difficulties or contradictions. All the arguments concerning Puruṣa and its multiplicity are quite in keeping with the dualistic and realistic position of the classical Sāṅkhya.

Professor D. D. Vadekar, in his learned article under the title 'The Sāṅkhya Arguments for the Puruṣa' (published in the *Philosophical Quarterly*, January 1960), has taken great pains to show that the Sāṅkhya arguments employed in the seventeenth *kārikā* have failed to prove the existence of the pure Sāṅkhya Puruṣa. The *kārikā* runs as follows :

*Saṅghātaparārthatvāt triguṇādiviparyayād adhiṣṭhānāt  
puruṣo'sti bhoktrbhāvāt kaivalyārtham pravṛtteśca.*

These arguments may be summed up as follows ; Spirit exists as distinct from matter, (a) since collocations serve a purpose of something other than themselves ; (b) since this other must be the reverse of what is composed of the three *guṇas* ; (c) since there must be control of the collocations ; (d) since there must be an enjoyer ; (e) since there is activity for the purpose of release from the threefold misery.



In the opinion of Professor Vadekar, these arguments fail to prove the existence of the pure Puruṣa, the nature of which has been described in the nineteenth *kārikā* of the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, in which Puruṣa has been described as indifferent (*udāsīna*) and neutral (*madhyastha*).

Here, the first point that should strike us at once is that this seventeenth *kārikā* has been employed to prove the existence only of Puruṣa, and not its indifference and neutrality. This Puruṣa is the one that has been caught in the snare of Prakṛti through reflection. Hence there is no difficulty in supposing that this Puruṣa is a purposeful being, and that its purpose is being fulfilled through the activity of the three *guṇas*. Here, one may pose a question : If this Puruṣa is a bound Puruṣa, having connection with desires and passions, then how are we to prove the existence of an indifferent and neutral self ? If we think over the metaphysical significance of the argument deeply and carefully, we shall be able to discover that this argument can be employed to prove the existence of the pure Puruṣa as well. The real meaning of the first argument is that the existence of the unconscious matter becomes meaningful only when it is associated with Consciousness. Matter, by itself, is of no use unless it is revealed by Consciousness. In the absence of its revelation by Spirit, it is as good as non-existent. Prakṛti is pure potentiality, and such a pure potentiality, devoid of any actual character, is of no advantage to anyone. Prakṛti assumes a definite character through its connection with Spirit, and so, in and through the whole process of its manifestation, the meaning of Prakṛti is being constantly revealed through its connection with Puruṣa. Prakṛti looks upwards to Puruṣa and finds in it its true meaning. Consciousness as mere revelation is always pure, indifferent, and non-agent. The word '*saṅghāta*' refers to unconscious matter, and the word '*parārthatvāt*' implies that, without the existence of Consciousness, matter is blind and meaningless.

Even if we understand by *saṅghāta* the objects of enjoyment like bed, mat, etc., and hold that the existence of these objects prove the existence of a *bhoktr* Puruṣa only, then also, there will be no contradiction in holding that Puruṣa, in its pure form, is indifferent and neutral. This is because, if we analyse *bhoktrtva* metaphysically, we find that *bhoktrtva* ultimately implies nothing but the illuminating consciousness that constitutes the nature of the pure Puruṣa. Such a pure consciousness is always indifferent and neutral.

The examples of bed, mat, etc. are given here only to show that these things cannot have any meaning unless they are related to some conscious being. These examples are not meant to suggest that a Puruṣa, too, enjoys the products of Prakṛti in a manner similar to what we find ordinarily in the case of the enjoyment of such objects by human beings.

Further, there is no such rule that there can be no enjoyment unless there is a desire for it. There may be an experience even when there is no desire for it. The prisoners undergo jail experiences against their will.

The second argument (*(triguṇādi viparyayāt)*), too, seeks to prove the existence of a Puruṣa who has already been caught in the snare of Prakṛti. It is only in such a Puruṣa that *viveka*, in the sense of intellectual understanding of the distinction between Spirit and matter, can arise. Such *viveka* is a *ṛtti* of the intellect. So, it is only a Puruṣa endowed with *buddhi* that can become the possessor of *vivekajñāna*. Just as the purely unconscious Prakṛti is incapable of having such *viveka*, in the same manner, a pure Puruṣa, dissociated from *buddhi*, is not in a position to have this *vivekajñāna*. *Ṛttyātmaka-viveka* belongs to *buddhi* only. The *viveka* that belongs to Puruṣa is only *prākāśātmaka-viveka*, which implies simply the manifestation of two principles as different, and does not refer to an intellectual understanding and evaluation of the

distinction. Hence *prakāśātmaka-viveka* is not in contradiction with the indifference and neutrality of *Puruṣa*. Just as there is no distinction between *caitanya* and *cetana* in the philosophy of *Sāṅkhya*, so also there is no distinction between *viveka* and *vivekin*. *Vṛttyātmaka-viveka* belongs to *Puruṣa* only when it is associated with *buddhi*. Even then, such intellectual modifications are owned by *Puruṣa* through reflection only. Therefore, *vṛttyātmaka-viveka* is a seeming attribute of *Puruṣa* and a real attribute of *buddhi*. There is, therefore, no contradiction in describing *Puruṣa* both as *vivekin* (from the point of view of *prakāśa*) and indifferent. •

The subjectivity of *Puruṣa*, again, refers simply to its power of receiving the reflection of *buddhi-vṛtti* that has assumed the form of an object. In other words, *Puruṣa* is a subject on account of the fact that it reveals naturally any object that happens to lie in its proximity. This *viśaya-sambandha*, however, does not signify that *Puruṣa* is not indifferent. On the other hand, everybody will admit that consciousness, as mere revelation of objects, cannot be regarded as anything but neutral. The objects of the world are getting manifested by the light of the sun; but nobody will admit that, in respect of the objects which are manifested by the sun's rays, the attitude of the sun is anything but neutral. *Triguṇādi viparyāyāt* means that *Puruṣa* is different from three *guṇas* which form the stuff of all the objects of enjoyment. In the bound condition also, the self refers to pure Consciousness only, and not to *buddhi*, even though it is the most powerful *jaḍa-prakāśa*. All the objects of the world are manifested by the intelligentized *buddhi*, and all attributes, like agency, enjoyment of worldly experiences, purposefulness, the motive of evaluation, etc., belong only to the intellect, and not to the pure *Puruṣa*.

Here, we must also remember that, according to the *Sāṅkhya*, the true *Jiva* is not the *pratibimba-puruṣa*, which is destroyed in the state of emancipation. *Jiva* is *Puruṣa*, the consciousness of which is reflected in a particular *buddhi*. Hence



the arguments which establish the existence of the *jiva* also establish the existence of pure *Puruṣa*. Any attribute, like subjective, discriminating, etc., belongs to *Puruṣa* from the point of view of *prākāśa* only. Consciousness in the sense of pure *prākāśa* is always indifferent, non-agent, and neutral.

In regard to the third argument, Professor Vadekar says : 'This argument, most evidently, proves, if it proves anything, the agency of the *Puruṣa*, rather than its non-agency.'

Here, the argument simply seeks to prove that *Puruṣa* is intelligizing *Prakṛti* by its mere *sannidhi* so as to make Nature fit for the creation of this world. *Puruṣa* is not, therefore, becoming an agent; *Puruṣa* is the principle of consciousness that vitalizes *Prakṛti* by its mere existence (*sattā*). Brahman, too, is the *adhiṣṭhāna* of *māyā* ; but nobody imputes agency to Brahman on that account.

The fourth argument seeks to prove the *bhokṛt-bhāva* of the *Puruṣa* that has already been connected with Nature through reflection. Enjoyment in the ordinary sense is not possible in the case of pure matter ; nor is it possible in the case of pure consciousness. It is only the seemingly unified category of Spirit and matter that becomes the enjoyer of worldly experiences. So, the *Puruṣa* that emerges from this argument, (when taken by itself) in its pure and unconnected form, must be admitted as neutral and indifferent, since pure consciousness can never be the subject of any kind of experience. Moreover, Vācaspati has explained the *bhokṛt-bhāva* of *Puruṣa* in the sense of *draṣṭṛbhāva* whereas Vijñāna-bhikṣu has interpreted *bhokṛt-bhāva*, in the sense of enjoyment through reflection.

Further, enjoyment and indifference are not really two contradictory terms. They can go together. A *jāvanmukta* *Puruṣa* is indifferent to pleasures and pains ; still, he has to

go through pains and sufferings, as long as his *prārabdha-karma* is not wholly worked out.

The last argument seeks to prove the existence of *Puruṣa* on the basis of the observed facts of the world. In this world, we find that the whole of creation is marching towards freedom, which seems to be its supreme goal. Pure unconscious matter can never have the goal of freedom, which belongs to the soul. So, we are led to believe that there must be bound souls which are to be made free in and through this process of world creation. In other words, the world is marching towards the freedom of these souls. All desires and strivings belong to *Prakṛti*. The pure Self is not an agent. The winding up of the colourful net of *Prakṛti* is done by *Prakṛti* itself, and not by *Puruṣa*. Bondage means a false unification of Consciousness with matter, and liberation means its dissociation. Unless there is *pravṛtti* in Nature, there will be no change and mutation, and consequently, the distinction of a static *Prakṛti* from a static *Puruṣa* cannot be fully realized. So, the argument that the strivings of Nature are for the purpose of emancipation (*kaivalyārtham pravṛteśca*) is quite logical from the dualistic standpoint of the *Sāṃkhya* metaphysics.

Thus, all the arguments given in the seventeenth *kārikā* do prove what they actually intend to prove (viz., the existence of *Puruṣa* as consciousness and illumination). It seems Professor Vadekar has not considered the *Sāṃkhya* with the care and sympathy that it deserves : otherwise he would not have raised such unfair objections against the philosophy of this school.

The *Sāṃkhya* philosophy of the multiplicity of selves, too, has been unsympathetically criticized by many modern critics. While making any criticism of the *Sāṃkhya*, we must remember that this doctrine, like the *Nyāya*, is a realistic system, and, as such, every fact of experience is in its

opinion, real and not illusory. Difference, for instance, is a felt experience, and hence it must be admitted as real. The difference between Spirit and matter, the difference between one material object and other, and the difference between one individual soul and another are all real facts. Hence these real facts must exist in all the levels of experience. The Advaita Vedānta believes in the falsity of difference, and so, all sorts of difference vanish in the air in the Advaita state of *mukti*. Now, if we make an attempt to interpret the Sāṃkhya with 'Advaita inclinations' in our mind, then, we are bound to meet with logical contradiction and irregularity at every step. For Advaita, *jivatva* produced by *buddhi*, *ahankāra*, etc. is false. It is purely imaginary, while the only reality is the undivided Consciousness or Brahman. According to the Sāṃkhya, however, *buddhi*, *ahankāra* etc. are not false. They are as real as consciousness. What is false is the relation of all these with Puruṣa. Since *buddhi*, *ahankāra*, *vāsanā*, *saṃskāra*, etc. are all real, the differences created by all these causes in the empirical lives of the different individual souls are also real. Differences, which are noticed in the different reflections of different *buddhis*, are all real. Since the images or *pratibimbās* are different, the *bimbās* also must be different. Real distinction in effects can be produced by really distinct causes. In the empirical sphere, we find real difference among individuals, and this difference must therefore exist in the transcendental sphere as well. There are different *buddhis*, different *pratibimbās* or reflections, and different *bimbās* or Puruṣas. When a Puruṣa is finally liberated, the reflection is destroyed, and so, Puruṣa becomes fully dissociated from its *buddhi*, which then gets merged in Prakṛti. Diversity and multiplicity in creation are real, and these can be satisfactorily explained by assuming the existence of the different *avivēkas* of the different Puruṣas. Created objects are many, and the selves that reveal these objects in different ways are also many.

If we hold that consciousness is one, and it falsely appears as many due to unreal investments (*upādhis*), then,



we shall not be able to do justice to the essentially realistic and dualistic position of the Sāṃkhya. Real difference in the *upādheya* can never be caused by mere difference in the limiting adjuncts. A man may put on different dresses at different times ; but this difference in his dresses will not cause any real difference in him. In the opinion of the dualistic and realistic Sāṃkhya, difference, in all its forms, is eternal. So, if difference is created by the non-eternal *upādhi*, then, with the destruction of the *upādhi*, difference, too, will vanish; and if difference is destroyed, the realistic and dualistic position of the Sāṃkhya cannot be maintained.

Further, it has been pointed out by some critics that qualitative identity cannot go with numerical plurality. If all selves are of the same nature, there can never be many selves, since there will be nothing to distinguish one Puruṣa from another. Now, if we reflect on this point carefully, we find just the opposite fact. Truly speaking, it is possible for us to have numerical plurality even without qualitative difference. In fact, qualitative identity loses its meaning unless there is numerical plurality. Unless there are at least two, there is no sense in asserting the existence of qualitative identity. The expression 'qualitative identity' can never be used if there is only one substance. This point has also been emphasized in the *Muktāvalitikā* of the *Bhāṣāpariccheda*.

Another objection is that, according to the Sāṃkhya, there is no difference among the selves in point of proximity to Prakṛti, due to which sorrows and sufferings happen to them. So, it follows that, when one self is afflicted with sorrow, all the other selves will be equally afflicted.

Here, we should remember that a self is not afflicted with sorrows and miseries due to *sannidhi* alone. Pleasures and pains occur to a Puruṣa on account of its *karmavāsanā*, which remains stored up in the *buddhi* with which it is associated from beginningless time. Enjoyment, therefore, is different for different selves. *Aviveka* creates a seeming

association of attachment and identification between Spirit and matter, and it is due to this sort of contact that a self goes through the experiences of pleasures and pains. When this *karmavāsanā* or *aviveka* of a particular self is destroyed, that self is liberated. If we consider the Sāṃkhya philosophy from this point of view, there will be no contradiction or irrationality in respect of the nature of Pure Puruṣa and its multiplicity.



## THE NYAYA-VAISESIKA CONCEPTION OF SOUL

### (A CRITICAL EXPOSITION)

In this article I propose to make a critical survey of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of soul, which is a bold departure from the Upaniṣadic conception of the Ātman.

In India, soul is generally accepted as an eternal and permanent principle. All orthodox schools also agree that the soul is essentially pure and that in its pure form, it is never affected by any kind of worldly impurities. Further, sorrows and joys of life, pleasures and pains never form a real part of the ever pure self. The Ātman is distinct and different from the psycho-physical organism and its connection with the latter is only artificial or illusory. There is, however, no universal agreement among the different orthodox schools regarding the noumenal character of the Ātman. For the Sāṃkhya, the self is pure consciousness; for the Vedānta the self is pure consciousness, pure existence and pure bliss; and for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the soul is totally devoid of all qualities including consciousness.

According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers, there is no distinction between knowledge and consciousness. *Caitanya* is identical with *jñāna* or *buddhi*. The soul, dissociated from the psycho-physical organism, becomes dissociated from the instruments through which knowledge can be gathered. Hence in the disembodied condition the soul fails to have any kind of knowledge. Knowledge has origination and decay. Like all other non-eternal objects, it arises in the self from a conglomeration of conditions and when the conditions are disjointed, knowledge or consciousness immediately disappears. Ātman in its noumenal form is, thus, wholly unconscious and its relation with consciousness is only external and accidental.



Non-recognition of the identity between self and consciousness constitutes an important feature of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika realism. This is due to the fact that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy has recognized from the very beginning a distinction and not *Tādātmya* between the thing and its quality or essence. "Jar" as a substance is different and distinct from its red colour as well as from "jarness" which is its essence ; and both of them are related to it by the relation of inherence. The self as knower is also the substance which is characterized by knowledge. Our inner experience always takes the form of "I know", "I am pleased", "I am sorry" etc. Moreover, in inner perception the self is always revealed to us as the substratum of knowledge, volition, pleasures, pains etc. and is never identified with any form of experience.

Although the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas, like the Upaniṣadic sages, have admitted the existence of the transcendental and eternal self, yet they have used their own independent judgement while reducing this transcendental self to an indeterminate characterless abstraction which may be held to be equivalent to non-being or nothing. If we destroy all qualities of the self, including consciousness, the self itself seems to be destroyed.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika method of distinguishing and separating substance from its quality or essence and of holding substance to have a being independent of quality or essence seems to be guaranteed only by the evidence of uncritical experience of the common man. A careful analysis of experience of the world, however, reveals and affirms that quality or essence is identical with the thing or determines the character of a specific substance. What prevents a thing from vanishing into nothingness is its essence or determinateness and it is impossible for us to think of a thing or substance as different from its essence. The being of a jar consists solely in its "jarness" and the jar can never be thought of without "jarness". This essence, the

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika have abstracted from the thing and then they have given it the name *Jāti*. This *Jāti*, in their opinion, is eternal and indestructible. "Jarness" existed before the creation of different jars and it will continue to exist even after the destruction of all jars.

Since in the case of the soul, they have applied the same method, the soul has been viewed as a substance in which the essence *Ātmatva* inheres. It is only when the soul comes in contact with the body and mind that qualities like *jñāna*, *iccha*, *prayatna*, *sukha*, *duḥkha* arise in it. Viewed critically, this theory seems to have treated the soul in the same manner in which an ordinary material object has been treated even though these philosophers have tried hard to preserve a definite line of distinction between their view of the soul and that of the materialistic school. They have refuted emphatically the view that body is identical with the soul. Had consciousness resided in the body, we could have found this quality even in a dead body. As this never happens in this world, the body must not be regarded as the substratum of consciousness. The materialistic contention that consciousness resides in a living body, has been rejected by these philosophers, as in that case we shall not be able to explain the continuity of consciousness as well as memory. The body is continually becoming new. The body of childhood is not the same as the body of the youth, and the body that one has in his old age is different from the body that he had in his childhood. If consciousness is a quality of the body, then it also will change constantly and, therefore, there will be intermittent breaks in the continuity of conscious life, which in turn will impair memory. Even mind cannot be regarded as the substratum of consciousness. Mind is atomic, and if knowledge had been a property of the mind, then it would also have been atomic and therefore non-perceptible in nature, which really is not true. Both body and mind are thus found to be unsuitable for serving as the substratum of knowledge. The soul, in their opinion

is also eternal. A new-born baby starts sucking its mother's breasts without going through any course of training. This the baby can do simply because it had learnt this activity in some prior births. On the basis of such facts, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers establish the existence of an eternal and permanent soul in which *Samskāras* of the previous births remain stored up from a beginningless time and which passes through a series of births and deaths till it is finally liberated.

Thus, so far as these characteristics of eternality and permanence of the soul and also its bondage, liberation and transmigration are concerned, we do not find any radically new idea in the philosophy of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school. It is only in respect of the noumenal nature of the soul that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school adds a new note which is not in keeping with the Upaniṣadic tradition. If we search deeply for the cause, it will perhaps not be very difficult for us to trace it out in the multicoloured soil of our own motherland.

The Nyāya philosophy developed gradually in course of its fight against the Buddhistic philosophy. It was therefore not unlikely that in its resistance against this *Avaidikā* religion, it had accepted (perhaps unconsciously) many thoughts and ideas of Buddhism which were appealing to them. From the second century A. D., upto the eleventh century A. D., the Buddhistic thoughts were prominent; and because of the rational and catholic spirit of Buddhism it was popular among the people. The important task of refuting the anti-Vedic arguments of the Buddhistic school was taken up by the Naiyāyikas. *Sūnyavāda* was criticized in the Nyāya-Sūtras. Nyāya-Vārtikā was written by Uddyotakara with a view to refuting the charges of Dignaga and Vasubandhu. The most remarkable *Avaidikā* feature of Buddhism figured prominently in the form of the Pudgala-Nairātmya-vāda of this school, and this was the doctrine that became the target of criticisms from all other orthodox schools of philosophy and religion. So far as egoity and personality are concerned, we find that all orthodox schools agree with Buddhism in holding that these



are due to ignorance and that these are also the root causes of all worldly pains and miseries. The psychological self is fictitious, unreal and therefore non-permanent. The first step towards *Mokṣa*, therefore, consists in the realization of the unreality of this psychological and personal ego. The ego and individuality have got to be transcended in order to reach spiritual perfection. While Sāṃkhya-Yoga and the Vedānta idealism admit the existence of a permanent self as transcendental consciousness which serves as the uniting principle of all knowledge and phenomenal thinking, the Buddhists refuse to recognize any such eternal principle of consciousness and reduce self to momentary states and processes of phenomenal consciousness of our empirical life. The denial of permanent consciousness and recognition of impermanence and change in the realm of psychical phenomena seem to constitute common features of both Buddhism and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy. Judging the importance of the Buddhistic thoughts and ideas with which the philosophical atmosphere of that period was highly charged, we may infer that the essentially logical minds of the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas did discover a layer of truth in the Buddhistic denial of permanent consciousness. If we analyse consciousness, we actually find nothing but mutable psychical states appearing in the forms of knowledge, desires, will, pleasures, pains etc. These are the contents of our self and these are not stationary and eternal. They appear and disappear due to the operation of their generative and annihilative conditions. Soul as pure transcendental consciousness can never be demonstrated in actual experience. We never become aware of the dual nature of consciousness, one phenomenal and the other transcendental. In fact, if we make a distinction between permanent consciousness of self and mutable knowledge or *Buddhi* (as is done by the Sāṃkhya and the advaita Vedānta), then we shall have to admit that in one and the same body, two different forms of consciousness, belonging to two different orders, exist at the same time. Yet nobody is aware of this

duality. Such a position does not seem to be justifiable from the Nyāya point of view.

These philosophers have, however, maintained their orthodox attitude by denying emphatically the Buddhistic doctrines of momentariness and *pratītyasamutpāda* in every sphere, including the sphere of consciousness. Production and destruction are correlatives to increase and decrease; (*upacaya* and *apacaya*) and increase as well as decrease can happen to things only if they last for more than one moment. If a thing is momentary, then increase and decrease which need different points of time, can never be predicated of it. It is only a thing having *Sthāyitva* (duration for some time) that can increase at one moment and decrease at another. So, though consciousness is unsteady and impermanent, it does not last for one moment only. Both momentariness and *pratītyasamutpāda* favour the maxim : “*Asataḥ Sat-utpadyate*”, which goes against all empirical evidence. If *Asat* can be the cause of *Sat*, then we ought to have seedlings from the seeds which have been reduced to powder. The causal relation of succession, advocated by the Buddhists was however accepted by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, but they have preserved the Upaniṣadic tradition by holding the causal view of *Bhāvāt bhāvotpattiḥ*. An effect for them is always the result of the operation of three forms of causal factors which function together in such a manner that from their joint operation a new phenomenon comes into existence. One form of causal factor is called *samavāyi-kāraṇa* or that which is capable of producing an effect which inheres in it.

*Samavāyi kāraṇa* is either of the nature of the component parts or of the nature of the substratum in which the effect inheres. Knowledge or consciousness, being and effect, must have a *samavāyi kāraṇa* or substratum and this substratum is the soul. Here knowledge arises from a combined functioning of soul, mind, sense-organs and object and if any of these factors becomes inoperative, consciousness fails to appear. Consciousness as an effect is different from each one

of the causal factors, although it is dependent on them. The essentially realistic minds of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika seem to have taken here a very bold step, and unlike any other traditional theory based on the Upaniṣadic conception of pure consciousness, have declared that consciousness is only a mutable product and accidental quality of the soul and that it is dependent on the object. Consciousness unrelated to an object is an absurdity. Thus the object here is not a modified form of consciousness. On the contrary, the importance of consciousness has been deliberately minimized by making it dependent on the object, •

Here, the question arises : Does the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system fare well in the field of philosophy by recognizing the reality of a characterless and unconscious soul ? The answer cannot be given in the affirmative. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika hypothesis that knowledge is a separable quality of an unconscious soul-substance and that it can arise only in relation to an external object, goes against the evidence of experience in the sense that it fails to make adequate provision for the self-conscious nature of human thought. Moreover, the complete separation between self and consciousness has given almost a materialistic colour to the metaphysics of these two schools. If the soul substance in its pure form is totally devoid of consciousness then how are we to distinguish and differentiate it from another inert unconscious substance like a jar ?

Of course, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers will answer this criticism by saying that the self differs from a so-called material object in the sense that while in a material object, there is *atyantābhāva* of consciousness, it is not so in the case of self. If this reply is judged critically, then also, we have to admit that "self" possesses an inseparable and in-distinguishable character (essence) different from the physicality of the so-called material objects. This essence or inseparable character is identical with the thing and it is only by virtue of this essential quality that a substance is distinguished



either as material or as spiritual. If "Jarness" is separable from the "Jar" and *Ātmatva* from the *Ātman*, then in their pure forms (i. e. abstracted from their essences) they will never be distinguishable from each other. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas have identified knowledge with consciousness but they have preserved the word *Ātmatva* to connote the essential quality of the *Ātman*. Now what does the word *Ātmatva* stand for? If it means *Cetanatva*, then the soul will be a conscious substance even in its pure form : as being a *Nitya-dravya*, it will never be separated from its *jāti* or essence. In that case, the Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas too must be prepared to recognize two forms of consciousness, one phenomenal and one noumenal. But if *Ātmatva* is not identified with *Cetanatva* thereby making *Cetanatva* a non-separable quality of the soul, then there will be no means at the disposal of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers to save their metaphysics from falling into the dark abyss of materialism. This is a point which needs much careful analysis and very critical reflections ; and it seems to me that there is still much scope for research work in this direction. Such a research will surely be able to throw more light on the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of soul.

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## ŚŪNYA-VĀDA IN NYĀYA-SŪTRA—

### A CRITICAL EXPOSITION

Early Buddhism which started in the teachings of Lord Buddha, had received the most logical treatment in the “Śūnyatā” doctrine of the Mādhyamika school, founded by Nāgārjuna in the second century A. D. From the 2nd century A. D. up to the ninth century A. D. Buddhism was the most powerful religious force in India and during this period Buddhism had reached the zenith of high admiration and intellectual glory. The popularity and high intellectual attainments of the Buddhistic philosophy naturally aroused vehement opposition from various quarters and all orthodox schools began to attack this system from different points of view. “Śūnyavāda”, which is regarded as the central teaching of Buddhism, was severely criticised in the ‘Nyāya-Sūtra.’

The object of this article is to make a critical review of some of these criticisms which were levelled against the “Śūnyavāda” doctrine of the Mādhyamika school by the realistic Naiyāyikas of the orthodox Hindu-fold.

The Naiyāyikas, as we all know, represent the realistic school and they are out to establish the reality of the external world on logical grounds. Naturally, therefore, the maxim “Sarvam Śūnyam” is repugnant to them. To them the world is such that we can see, feel and touch it every day in our routine-life. How can we, they ask, deny the reality and existence of this diversely and continuously experienced world? They go further and hold that the positive and concrete objects of the world are continuously and forcefully stimulating the intellect of human beings and that they are being thought of and reflected upon by different individuals in all ages, in all places and at all times. These facts, they maintain, prove the reality of the external world which is the

constant object of our intellectual apprehension and consideration. A wholly unreal thing like the hare's horn can never become an object of intellectual consideration.

The "Śūnyavādins" have referred to the relative nature of all appearances in order to prove their unreality or essencelessness.<sup>1</sup> That alone can be called an essence or reality which can exist by itself. Nāgārjuna has said : "That which comes from *Hetu* and cannot remain without the *pratyayas*, and ceases to be in the absence of the *pratyayas*, cannot be regarded as existent. As there is only *Pratitya-samutpāda* or dependent origination, there must be the lack of intrinsic nature. The cloth remains in the threads and is relative to and non-separable from the threads. How can we then say that the cloth is real or has an independent nature of its own ? Such is the case with all phenomena which are subject to *Pratitya-samutpāda* without exception, No phenomenon can originate from itself or can be understood by itself. Nothing, therefore can be accepted as real. Śūnyatā is the logical culmination of *Pratityā-samutpāda* which reigns supreme in this phenomenal world".

The *Śūnyavādi* attitude of the Mādhyamika school has been criticised in the 'Nyāya-Sūtra'. According to the school of 'Nyāya-Sūtra' mutual relativity involves the fallacy of *arguing in a circle*.<sup>\*</sup> If "greater" is relative to less, then "less" cannot be relative to "greater", as relativity from both sides is logically unsound. If one at least is admitted as non-relative, then "Sarvaśūnya-vāda" falls to the ground. Moreover, a phenomenon is relative to and non-separable from its "Samavāyi-kāraṇa" (Āśraya) not because it is unreal, but because of the peculiar relation that exists between every cause and its effect. The Samavāyi-kāraṇa is the Upādāna and the effect is the "upādeya". Whatever is an "upādeya" can never be anywhere else than in its own "upādāna" and must be relative to it. So when we think of cloth or perceive cloth

<sup>1</sup>Nyāya-Sūtra—39, Chap. 4 Anhika—1

<sup>\*</sup>Parasparāśraya doṣaḥ

in actual life, we always find it inhering in its cause—the threads. This inherence of the effect in the cause does not, however, prove its unreality, as the effect, being a new creation, is always experienced as distinct and different from the cause serving a different end. Again this relation of relativity and non-separableness (which has been made the present ground for proving unreality of objects) does not exist between any two things. It exists only between a Samavāyi-kāraṇa and its effect. “Jar” is not dependent on “cloth” nor is cloth relative to “Jar”. These two are distinct and different having no relation of mutual dependence between them. “Jar” and “Cloth” are always experienced as two things, independent of each other. Further we find that different forms of “Buddhi” are needed to experience different concrete objects. “Jar” can be experienced by perceptual intellect (Pratyakṣa-buddhi) whereas atoms can be known only by inferential intellect (Anumānabuddhi). If all things possess the same Śūnya-nature, then they should all be apprehended by the same form of intellect. Differences in intellect prove distinctions among objects and that proves their reality. So Śūnya or void cannot be the ultimate truth.

On pragmatic grounds also, the reality of objects can be established\* (1) We make a “jar” from a lump of clay, use it in bringing water, drink that water and thus we quench our thirst. Had these concrete things been illusory, we could not have fulfilled so many of our everyday purposes with their help. *Asat* (or mere negation) can never give us any real fruitful experience. Again, if we accept the maxim “Sarvam Śūnyam”, then we shall not be able to recognise the reality of “Pramāṇas” even for establishing “Śarva-Śūnya-vāda” and in the absence of a real “pramāṇa”, the doctrine of Śūnya-vāda cannot be established. If on the other hand “pramāṇa” is admitted to be real, then we cannot say that “Śūnya” or void is the ultimate truth. At least Pramāṇa will not be “Śūnya” or void. Further

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\*Prasannapadākhya Vyākhyā by Sudarsanacharyya on  
Sūtra 29, Chap. 4 Anhika-1.



if 'Sarva-Śūnyatva' can be established without the help of any "pramāṇa", then the same procedure may also be adopted to establish the reality of "Sarva-padārtha"<sup>1</sup>(2).

The upholders of Śūnya-vāda compare everyday experiences of our waking life with the illusory experiences of our dreams. Just as in dreams, unreal objects can be experienced as real, in the same way, in our waking life, we have experiences of objects, although in reality there are no such things. This can also be compared with the tricks of an able magician who gives us experiences of various things which are fictitious and wholly unreal. The contention of the 'Nyāya-Sūtras' is that these dream objects too are not wholly unreal<sup>1</sup>(3). Dream-objects are, indeed, the memory-images of the objects experienced during waking life. It is because these dream objects are not generally experienced in the same way in waking life that they are called unreal. Dream-objects vanish as soon as the dreamer gets up from his sleep. Further, if non-experience of dream-objects in waking life proves their voidness, then the experience of objects in waking life also should prove their reality. Variety in dream experiences, again, cannot be explained if we accept the theory of Śūnya. Diversity in effects is always due to diversity in causal conditions. If there is nothing but Śūnya, then Śūnya should be the cause of every thing : from an identical cause, we can never have diversity of effects.

Here the followers of the Nyāya-Sūtras apprehended an objection from the side of their opponents. The opponents may say that if the dream-object is only a memory-image of the object experienced in waking life, then it should not be regarded as unreal. In answering this objection, it has been stated in the 'Nyāya-Sūtra' that the dream-objects are regarded as unreal only because they are not experienced by the dreamer when he wakes up from his sleep. Otherwise, all the materials of the dream-experiences are gathered from the

<sup>1</sup> Nyāya-Sūtra—30, Chap. 4, Anhika—2.

<sup>2</sup> Nyāya-Sūtra—34, Chap. 4, Anhika—2.

diverse experiences of his waking life. Dream-objects as objects are not unreal ; they appear as unreal because of the peculiar dream-situation in which they are perceived.

The *Sūnyavādins* often say that just as the experience of our waking life invalidates our dream-knowledge, in the same manner, the empirical knowledge of our waking-life can be proved to be false by the higher knowledge of the ultimate truth.

Here, the followers of the 'Nyāya-Sūtras' have taken much pain to show that knowledge of ultimate truth can destroy only the false intellect and cannot prove the unreality of the objects of our practical life. A real object is sometimes known in a wrong manner due to certain prevailing conditions. When true knowledge arises it is the false knowledge that disappears immediately, leaving the object untouched. The real object remains as such and nothing happens actually to wipe it out from existence. When pieces of detached clouds assemble together in the sky in a particular form and order, we get the vision of a "Gandharva-Nagar" on the blue canopy. This creation is due to the operation of "mithhyā buddhi," or false intellect. True knowledge of so many pieces of clouds destroys this deceiving intellect at once, whereas clouds as clouds remain in the sky with no change in their being.

Again, we normally recognise two forms of knowledge—true and false. In the case of magic, for example, we find that the magician possesses true knowledge about the nature of his magic-wand and skill; but the knowledge of the audience regarding those things is false. The person who sees the mirage as mirage from a close quarter possesses true knowledge of it, but the person who sees the mirage from a distance perceives it as a lake and thus his knowledge of it is false. Hence we find that everybody makes such a distinction and accepts the reality of true knowledge. The "Sūnya-vadins", therefore, cannot say that all things of this world are "Sūnya" or nothing.

While making a critical review of all these criticisms of the "Nyāya-Sūtra", we may point out that the Nyāya philosophers have not been able to understand the real meaning of the word "Sūnya" and, therefore, they have failed to be fair and just in their criticisms against the Mādhyamika school. Sūnya, when used in the literatures of the Mādhyamika school, connotes something entirely different from its ordinary sense. When interpreted in relation to the world, "Sūnya", in Mādhyamika literatures, refers to the relative and conditional nature of this phenomenal creation.<sup>5</sup>

The Sūnyavādins have followed the middle path between eternalism and nihilism or between absolute reality and absolute unreality. So far as the phenomenal world is concerned, it is neither absolutely real nor absolutely unreal : it is only relative and conditional (Pratītya samutpannam vasturūpam samvṛtti ucyate). Absolutely real is that which is independent and absolutely unreal is that which is fictitious and has no being in the true sense, such as sky-flower or hare's horn. In between these two, there is, however, a third category (Sūnya) which stands for conditional and relative realities. In the 'Advaita Vedānta', this third category is described as "Anirvacanīya". As the world is a world of conditional realities or appearances the world is called 'Sūnya' by the Mādhyamika school. They have never denied the empirical reality of this phenomenal world. In the Mādhyamika Kārikā it has been stated very clearly that nobody will be able to reach the ultimate goal, if he neglects altogether the empirical truth of this phenomenal world. It is only through the lower that we can go to the higher. (Vyavahāram anāsṛtya paramārtho na deśyate). We do have constant intercourse with the objects of the world and they do possess reality : but this reality is only a dependent reality,—the posterior event depending on the prior event. Since, all the so-called things of the world are related, they are all mutually dependent

and relative and on that account are essenceless or 'Śūnya'. So runs the maxim "Sarvam Śūnyam".

The sensible world is a causally dependent world. Here we find a free reign of casuality everywhere. What is produced from a cause possesses only a conditional nature and it is this conditionality or relativity that constitutes the real meaning of the word : "Śūnya". Śūnya does not mean "asat" or mere negation. Even a "jar" that satisfies our practical needs is dependent on its cause and this dependent nature of the "jar" will be accepted even by the followers of the 'Nyāya-sūtra'. When the Naiyāyikas say that a "jar" which is "asat" can never satisfy a real need, they mean by "asat" pure non-being or "abhāva". When the Śūnyavādins say that the "jar" is Śūnya, they refer only to its dependent nature. As meanings are entirely different in these two cases, the fight of the Naiyāyikas over the word "Śūnya" is absolutely ill-conceived and illogical.

Of course, "Śūnyavādins" have often taken as examples mirage, dream and illusion to prove 'Śūnyata' of the empirical world : but these examples should not be interpreted too liberally. The most important task before the 'Śūnyavādins' was to save people from an over-dose of materialism which was creating a hell in the philosophical atmosphere of our country. The extremists of the materialistic school had demolished all distinction between soul and matter and had undermined the importance of all values of life. In fact, it developed into a theory of "Śarīravāda" and gross sensualism and held a natural charm for the general public who were after the joys of life and pleasures of the senses. The world was so near and dear to them that it was not a very easy task for the Buddhists to convince these people about the ultimate unreality of all worldly things. Even to-day, many of us will refuse straightway to admit that the world is not absolutely real. To accomplish this difficult task in that age, the Mādhyamika philosophers wisely selected such examples from our daily life which everybody would accept as unreal. There



is indeed no loophole in any of these examples through which even a faint faith in the reality of the world can cast its influence on our mind. Hence, with the help of these examples, the Śūnya-vādī philosophers had tried to establish emphatically the ultimate unreality of the phenomenal world which was their chief aim. The followers of the 'Nyāya-Śūtra' have admitted that the dream-objects are not wholly real or wholly unreal, since the materials are collected from the experiences of our waking life. If this be the case, then the dream-phenomena should be the best things to be compared with the empirical world which is also neither wholly real nor wholly unreal.

In conclusion, it may be stated that it is definitely wrong to hold that the Mādhyamika school does not believe in the existence of any "tattva" except pure negation. The Mādhyamika Kārikā defines "Tattva" as that which can be known directly, that which is unruffled, that which is not coloured by plurality, and that which is Nirvikalpa and Anānārtha. This *tattva* is the non-dual absolute truth and it is beyond the reach of intellect. As the absolute reality is not coloured by plurality it may also be called "Śūnya" in the sense of 'prapanca-śūnya'. In his "Indian Philosophy", Dr. Chandra Dhar Sharma has justly said that the word 'Śūnya' is used in a double sense in the Mādhyamika literatures. "It means the relative as well as the absolute. It means relativity as well as reality." The so-called phenomena of the world are "svabhāva-śūnya" or devoid of ultimate reality, and reality is "prapanca-śūnya" or devoid of plurality.

The Nyāya-contention that the 'Śūnyavādins were negativists who were out to preach an absurd doctrine of 'Pure Negation' is unjust and inappropriate. It was the literal meaning of the word "Śūnya" that had caused all these misunderstandings and misrepresentations and had also retarded the growth of Buddhist philosophy in India.

## THE CENTRAL CORE OF BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

The world according to Buddhism, is full of suffering and pain, disease, decay and death, and there is no getting out of these. This essentially painful nature of life was what awakened Buddha to seek a way out of it. He was not satisfied with the current philosophies of his age.

The most outstanding contribution which Buddha made to Indian philosophy was the discovery of the mutual dependence of things found in this world, which dependence again is a mark of unreality because all things of the world, including the "self" are subject to the laws of change, relativity and mutual dependence. This law of the relative existence of things and their mutual dependence is expressed in the doctrine of *pratityā samutpāda* or "dependent origination" which forms the central core of Buddhist philosophy. Nothing is permanent, nothing endures even for two moments together ; there are only diverse series of changes ; things do not exist with any essence in them, they exist only as causal relatives ; there being certain phenomena, there happen to be some others.

Causation in Buddhism always needs more than one condition. Nothing results from a single factor only. Thus Buddhism has made a distinction between *hetu* which ordinarily refers to the primary cause, and *pratyaya* which accompanies favourable conditions. In the case of a seedling, for example, the seed is the *hetu* ; and earth, water, heat, light etc. (without which the seedling cannot come up) are the *pratyayas*. The whole of this phenomenal world, according to Buddhism, is merely a playground of primary and secondary causes.

According to Buddhism, creations of all things and beings of the world take place in a continuous causal series in the

past, present and future. There is a ceaseless flow of elements and incessant becomings. The continuous temporal flow can be divided into twelve divisions, and these twelve divisions, being mutually dependent, form the twelve limbs of *pratitya samutpāda*, and the whole of this twelve divisioned cycle is called the wheel of life. As the wheel is revolving continuously, it is impossible for us to ascertain which one of the twelve limbs is really the first cause.

Some understanding of the twelve limbs, and the order in which they are usually enumerated may help us to grasp the implications of *pratitya-samutpāda*. The first is *avidyā*, ignorance, which means that it is the activity of the past life, done under the spell of greed, aversion and wrong knowledge that directly leads to the emergence of the present life. It is because of wrong knowledge and wrong perspective of things that one regards worldly objects as permanent and runs after them, thereby giving a constant push to the wheel of life to take more and more rounds of birth and death. This ignorance leads to the second limb viz., *saṃskāra* or the effect of the blind activity of the past life. The effect of the activity of the past life acts as the energy to bring forth a new life and a new series of existence. *Vijñāna*, the third limb, means embryonic consciousness. It arises at the first moment of conception. This *vijñāna* then takes one more step and becomes the cause of *nāma-rūpa*, the fourth limb, or the mind-body of embryonic life. The six sense organs develop in the next stage as the fifth limb but they are not used in the embryonic stage, *Sparsā* or contact, the sixth limb, refers to the early stage of infancy when the sense-organs of the newly formed life begin to come in touch with the objects of this world. *Vedanā*, the seventh limb, means the feelings of pleasure, pain and indifference. When the individual grows in age, he becomes familiar with the feelings of pleasures and pains. By *sparsā* he gains knowledge of the external world whereas *vedanā* awakens him to feel and enjoy various emotions of life. *Desire*, the eighth limb, depends on *vedanā*. When

the individual experiences pleasure, he grows eager to have this feeling again and again in his life. This is the stage of desire and it breeds attachment. It is the pursuit of desire that leads a man astray and weaves around him a net-work of births and deaths, miseries and sufferings. *Upādāna*, the ninth limb, means clinging to existence or making efforts to retain the object of pleasure. *Upādāna* produces *bhava* or the will to be, the tenth limb. An individual will not be able to experience the pleasures of life unless he is born. "The will to be" thus becomes the ground of our repeated existences. So *bhava* leads to *jāti*, birth, the eleventh limb which produces the twelfth and last limb viz. old age, death, sorrows etc.

These are the twelve factors considered by Buddhism as being responsible for the emergence of life and its variegated sense-experiences and emotions. These different stages are knitted together as if in a chain and every prior stage is the ground of the posterior one. So long as we remain in darkness and ignorance, the wheel remains in motion and whenever there is conflict and maladjustment, the wheel moves with jerks and as a consequence we become discontented and unhappy. The past, present and future are linked together in such a way that while enjoying in the present life the fruits of the past, one sows seeds for the future. Time does not flow in a straight line. It moves in a circle with no beginning or end. Death does not mean the end of life. Withering away of one life means the blossoming forth of another. When one series finishes, a new series at once springs up. *Samsāra* means series of lives moving in circles. Each wheel is a small circle of one life and the series of the wheel of life is *samsāra*.

The view that everything changes from moment to moment is known as the doctrine of momentariness. This doctrine too has been elaborately developed in Buddhist philosophy and religion. The whole world is a flux and everything is



being continually renewed. Nothing stands, nothing abides. There is no substance, either spiritual or material, that is not a particle of the ever-changing and ever-flowing stream. One moment bursts forth, vanishes and is immediately replaced by the next one which also disappears and makes room for the emergence of the subsequent one. In other words, there is only a series of moments and no permanent or eternal being. There is only the way of becoming, and there is no being that becomes. That everything in the phenomenal world is dynamic and ever-changing was recognised in India long before Buddha came. But while some of his predecessors held that the soul or some spiritual substance is permanent, eternal and not subject to the law of change, the Buddhists did not make any exception even with regard to it. There is, they said, only a series of momentarily existing psychical states and no abiding soul-substance. This, however, presents a problem. If there is no permanent individual, how can there be any relation between an individual, his action and its consequences? One performs an action at one moment, but he changes the next moment when the results of the action are experienced. How then are we to regard that person as the enjoyer of the fruits of his past deeds? In the same way, the person who experiences the consequences cannot have been the doer of the action, both the movements being different. It also follows from the above that an action, actually performed, does not produce any result as it is momentary in nature, and that while there is the result, there is in fact no action at all. Buddhism has tried to solve this difficulty in a manner which would appear to be logical. Although it is a fact that the succeeding moment comes into being when the preceding moment is destroyed, there is a very important relation between the two. It is only because the preceding moment is there, that the succeeding one comes into being. This relation is the relation of *pratītya-samutpāda* or dependent origination. Moments run in a series and are, no doubt, different. Still,

because the preceding one happening, the succeeding one happens, there is a sort of continuity of distinct moments flowing in a series without a break, in which each succeeding moment inherits some characteristics of the preceding one. Thus we find different streams of life flowing in different directions and each stream is different from every other stream, bearing a particular name of its own. The life of "A" is one series and it is different from the series called "B". At every moment in "A" life, action is being performed, and the nature of the action of one moment is determining the nature of life of the subsequent moment, and in this manner actions are producing their consequences. The body of a man is always changing. The body that one has in his infancy changes as he becomes a boy; the boy then grows into a man and his body is different. Still, we overlook these changes and regard the series as one. The conception of unity or identity is merely subjective, being the product of our imagination polluted by ignorance. Nevertheless, this idea of unity arises because of the fact that the body of childhood is derived from the body of infancy. Therefore, the child is not free from the influences of the actions performed during infancy.

It is interesting to note that this "no soul" theory found an echo in the West in the 18th century in the writings of David Hume, to whom also, the self meant nothing but a series of successive mental states, there being no permanent soul-substance.

The principle of *pratītya-samutpāda* receives a magnificent handling in the writings of the Śūnyavādins according to whom, things of the world are mere appearances without any essence in them. The word *Śūnyatā* is used to imply that the phenomena of this empirical world have no intrinsic nature of their own. The essencelessness of all appearances, the Śūnyavādins, say, can be proved by the principle of *pratītya-samutpāda*. That alone can be called an essence which can exist by itself,

Since all the so-called things of the world are related, they are all mutually dependent and relative, and on that account are essenceless and unreal. Nāgārjuna, the great propagator of the doctrine of *Sūnyatā*, has said : "That which comes from *hetu* and cannot remain without the *pratyayas*, and ceases to be in the absence of the *pratyayas*, cannot be regarded as existent." *Śūnyatā* is the logical culmination of *pratītya-samutpāda*. If there is only reciprocity and mutual dependence, there must be the lack of intrinsic nature. We cannot accept *pratītya-samutpāda* and deny *Śūnyatā* as both of them are logically identical. Thus a single stroke of *pratītya-samutpāda* is enough to reduce the whole world to a mere show of appearances and phenomena with no substratum of their own. All phenomena are like dream images, fictitious and a false show without any real nature. Even *pratītya-samutpāda*, being a relation of the phenomenal world, is false and unreal. Just as in the West, the empiricism of Locke found its most logical development in the writings of Hume, so early Buddhist teachings based on the principle of *pratītya-samutpāda* received the most logical interpretation in the *Śūnyatā* doctrine of the Mādhyamika school, founded by Nāgārjuna (2nd cent. A.D.).

The twelve-divisional wheel of life, as we have seen, is ordinarily supposed to begin with ignorance or *avidyā*. *Avidyā* through certain intermediary links, leads to desire which in its turn brings about the clinging to existence. Desire, therefore, plays an important part in creating bondage. Due to ignorance, one wrongly perceives the truth and attaches permanent value to things which are not really in existence. By doing so, one thinks evil to be good ; naturally, there arises desire for the attainment of seeming good and seeming pleasures. Once such desire is aroused, it leads one astray bringing about one's ruin. When an action is performed under the influence of greed and attachment, that action becomes the cause of bondage and suffering. Karma, in fact, is nothing but volition or mental action even if it is not a physical one.

Mind is actually the inmost recess of all actions and there is no Karma without thought. Selfish action causes bondage whereas disinterested action springing forth from universal love and goodwill, loosens the bond of worldly existence. When bondage comes to an end, one rises above the plane of *pratītya samutpāda* and does not bring into existence any other being for rebirth.

It would appear from the above that *pratītya-samutpāda* is really the logic on which the entire Buddhist philosophy is based. The doctrines of momentariness and no-soul would not have made any impression on men's intellect and emotion had they not been supported by the principle of dependent origination. A number of different moments, wholly unconnected would have resulted only in a disorganised bundle and not in a well-ordered universe. The seed and the seedling are two different phenomena. Had there been no relation of dependence between them, we could not have expected to get the seedling out of a seed and could not have been able to think of them in a definite order. We are able to do so, simply because there is the relation of dependent origination. The term *pratītya-samutpāda* is very suggestive. We never perceive causal force in operation, nor have we any experience of causal transition. What we see in this world is that something comes into existence, leaves an effect and dies out. In other words, we can say, the cause-phenomenon being there, the effect-phenomenon comes into existence. The Buddhist who believes in "non-soul" is able to explain the efficacy of Karma, rebirth and moral responsibility, simply by the theory that the posterior moments being dependent on the prior once, seem to inherit something similar to those of the past ; otherwise they would have failed to satisfy the human intellect and reason just as it happened in the West with David Hume. Hume agrees with Buddhism in holding that there is no permanent substance, either spiritual or material. Buddhism, however, holds that all the distinct existences are rigidly conditioned as to their nature and form



by the *apriori* law of dependent origination, whereas it is not so with Hume's philosophy. Although Hume has tried to strengthen his metaphysical position by accepting the empirical laws of association and custom, yet these laws being themselves empirical in origin, create only paradoxes and do not act as real cementing forces as Hume wished them to be. In Buddhism, however, these notions of substance and causality being due to *avidyā*, are *apriori*. These are universally operative in the empirical world, although they have no application in trans-empirical state of Nirvāna. Thus Buddhism has given us not only the doctrine of "non-soul" but has also a very consistent logic in the form of *pratīya-samutpāda* to support it.



## **SAMKARA AND RAMANUJA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY\***

All forms of Vedāntic teachings are grounded on the truth that the supreme reality is Brahman or Ātman. Difference arises only in regard to the status of the individual soul and the world. Are individuality of the individual and materiality of matter real or false? If real, what sort of relation can justifiably be supposed to exist between Brahman and either of the two categories, i. e., spirit and matter. These are the problems which have led to the division of the Vedānta philosophy into different branches, such as non-dualism, qualified non-dualism, dualism and non-dualism etc.

The object of this paper is to make a comparative study of the views of Śaṁkara and Rāmaṇuja in respect of Brahman with a view to discovering how far these apparently rival theories can be brought close to one another.

### *Brahman According to Śāṁkara*

According to Śaṁkara, self or pure consciousness has been admitted as the Ultimate Reality. This consciousness is self-revealing, infinite, eternal, devoid of difference, qualityless, formless and unchangeable. If consciousness is not supposed to be self-revealing in nature, then for the revelation of consciousness, we shall have to assume the existence of some other principle of revelation which, again, will be in need of the third one and so on to infinity. That which depends on something other than its own self for revealing is inert (jaḍa). All things, other than Consciousness are revealed by Consciousness and so, in the opinion of Śaṁkara, all things except pure Consciousness are inert and false.

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\*Paper read at the Indology Section of XXVI International Congress of orientalist held in New Delhi on 8th January 1964.

### *Consciousness as Sat (Existence)*

Consciousness is of the nature of existence because prior non-existence of Consciousness (jñāna prāgabhāva) cannot be thought of. If we try to understand the prior non-existence of Consciousness, we can only do that with the help of Consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, is not different from being or existence. The self-revealing Consciousness is the self and the not-self is what depends on the self for revelation. It is because the soul is of the nature of existence and consciousness that nobody raises doubt regarding its existence<sup>1</sup>.

### *Consciousness as Bliss*

Pure Consciousness, which is the same as the soul is also of the form of bliss, because the ultimate source of all pleasures is the self or ātman. Anything that belongs to my Self is dear to me<sup>2</sup>. So the ātman which makes all things pleasurable and loveable is the real and infinite bliss (Bhūmānanda).

### *Self as Brahman*

The soul which is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss is identified with Brahman, the Great. That which is manifested outwardly as the universe, resides in the innermost recess of the human heart as soul<sup>3</sup>. It is because Brahman is of the nature of Infinite bliss that the Śruti has stated : “Yo vai bhūmā tat sukham, yo vai bhūmā tat amṛtam Bṛahma” (That which is infinite is bliss, that which is infinite is immortal Brahman)

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1. B. V.—11-3-7

2. Bṛhad Upaniṣad—4-5-6.

3. Sarvasyātmatvāt ca Brahmāstitva prasiddhiḥ. B. Ś 1-1. Samastasya viṣayjātasya pratisedhādaviṣayaḥ pratyagātmā Brahmeti jijñāsa nivartate. B. S. 111-2-23.

The pure Saccidānanda form of Brahman cannot be realised fully in the life of an ignorant man. This is because in waking life as well as in dream-life, the non-dual nature of the self is never revealed.

In the state of deep sleep, however, this non-dual nature of the self is revealed for a short while, but that too is not in its fully pure form. In the waking state, when we perceive soul in association with the false things of the false world, the pure nature of self is not revealed to us. This is because many false adjectives are falsely attributed to the soul. In the state of deep sleep, when there is no object-knowledge or no knowledge of duality, then ajñāna (ignorance) along with its mode (vṛtti) in the form of bliss is felt. So, it is a stage when through Vṛtti, self-revealing soul is directly known. Due to the revelation of the true nature of the soul to a certain extent in the state of deep sleep that one experiences bliss and for this reason, the state of dreamless sleep is known as *samprasāda*. It is only in the stage beyond deep sleep (turīya) that the non-dual manifests itself in its truly real form.

### *Brahman as the Cause of the World*

Brahman, in the opinion of Śaṅkara, is both the efficient and the material cause of the world. Being the substratum of the world, it is the efficient cause. The world can have no existence apart from it. It is also the material cause because the Śruti has stated “ekovijñānena sarva vijñānam ; yataḥ vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante etc”. All Śruti texts have asserted that Brahman is the material cause of the world. It is only by knowing the cause that one can know its effects due to the prior existence of the effect in a latent form in the cause.

Here we may pose a question ; how can the formless, changeless Brahman becomes the material cause of the world? In the opinion of Śaṅkara, the world that makes its appearance being limited and determined by space, time and causality, has no metaphysical reality. Just as a magician, by



means of his magic power, creates a dream world, which is wholly different from the world of our everyday experience, in the same manner, due to the existence of a beginningless ignorance, this wonderful but false world has come into being. Magician appears as a possessor of magic power due to ignorance of the audience. Brahman too appears as the possessor of the creative force due to beginningless ignorance that exists in the individual soul in the form of narrow egoism made impure by anādi-vāsanā. The illusion producing principal (Māyā) covers the real form of Brahman and then by joining together self and not-self creates a fictitious ego-sense. This false ego-sense (ādhyāsika ātmā) enjoys through antaḥkaraṇa (internal organ) the false effect i. e., the false world of the false māyā. When Brahman, through reflection, vitalises māyā and makes it fit for becoming the changeable matrix of the world, lordly powers emerge in the sāttvika upādhi which are falsely ascribed to Brahman due to ignorance. Brahman thus seems to assume the role of Lord in respect of the universe. This saguṇa Brahman is the object of religious worship. He is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. Admission of such a creator-God in advaita philosophy is necessary, otherwise an inert and unconscious Māyā alone cannot be regarded as the matrix of a systematic world. The Upaniṣad has stated :

Sa aikṣata lokānnu sṛjā ti  
Sa imān lokān asṛjāt.

Such a statement shows clearly that the conception of Saguṇa Brahman is inseparably associated with the conception of the world. The world and the world-creator are related to each other.

The conception of Saguṇa Brahman is, thus, to be adhered to when Brahman is spoken of as both the efficient and the material cause of the world. Saguṇa Brahman or God is the giver of the fruits of actions. Since fruition of an action often takes place long after the performance of the deed, the

action itself cannot be the producer of its fruits. So, it is absolutely necessary to recognise the existence of *Saguṇa Brahman* as the ethical ruler of the universe. God creates this world in accordance with the accumulated merits and demerits of the individual souls. The real basis of this natural world is the ethical stuff existing in the form of *Karma-vāsanās* of the individual souls. Natural order appears on an ethical foundation.

### *Saguṇopāsanā (Worship of God) and its Result*

From the above discussion, we get a clear idea that *Nirguṇa Brahman* is appearing as *saguṇa* so as to satisfy the religio-moral needs of the bound souls—needs which act as dynamic forces and inspire the bound-souls to look upward. But the soul that worships *Saguṇa Brahman* only goes to *Brahmaloka*. On reaching *Brahmaloka*, the individual soul becomes the possessor of lordly powers excepting the power of creation<sup>1</sup>. While in the *Brahmaloka*, the soul remains in the presence of God and enjoys divine pleasures under the supervision of God. The Śruti, too, has spoken of ‘bhoga-sāmyatā’ of the individual soul with God in *Brahmaloka*, [*yasmādbhogamātrameśāmanādi-siddhe neśvareṇa samānamiti śrūyate.*]

### *Bhakti as a Means to Saguṇa-Prāpti*

The *Saguṇa-prāpti* is possible by means of *bhakti* or devotion. To Śaṅkara also, devotion is akin to knowledge. He has stated clearly that a wise man, through devotion realises both the forms of *saccidānanda*—the form of *saguṇa* limited by *māyā* and also of the *nirguṇa* when devoid of all limiting conditions<sup>2</sup>.

1. B. S. Śaṅkara's commentary 4-4-17.

2. Gītā. Śaṅkara's commentary 18-55.

Bhaktiā mām abhijānāti yāvān ahaṁ upādhiḥkṛta Vi-  
tarabhedo yaḥ ca ahaṁ vidhvasta sarvapādhībhedā  
uttamā puruṣa ākāśa kalpaḥ tam mām advaitam.....  
anidhanam tattvataḥ abhijānāti.....

### *Liberation*

The true form of liberation (paramamukti), however, is attained when the soul realises differencelessness (nirguṇatva). Pure self-knowledge leads to such realisation. The Śruti also says : “tarati śokamātmavit”, “Brahmavidāpnotiparam” etc. The differenceless ātman is what is to be heard, reflected and meditated upon. This is immortality : this is liberation. The absolute consciousness or consciousness of differenceless ātman is, however, produced by a mode of the internal organ (antaḥkaraṇavṛtti)—a mode that assumes the form of Brahman and reveals it as free from all limiting conditions. This Brahmākārā vṛtti is the last knowledge of the self as the knower. This vṛtti arises when due to purification, the internal organ ceases to produce all other vṛttis which result in dualistic feelings of various sorts. The purified internal organ does not move or assume the form of any other wordly thing except the form of Brahman. After revealing Brahman as being devoid of all upādhis this Brahmākārā vṛtti, too, dies a natural death, just as fire dies out after consuming the fuel. Knowledge that is due to the last modification (brahmākārāvṛtti) is alone capable of revealing Brahman in its pure limitless form. So the Śruti says : एते ज्ञानात् ना मुक्तिः.

### *Similarities between Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja in regard to Brahman.*

If we compare Śaṅkara's conception of Brahman with that of Rāmānuja, we shall be able to detect close resemblances as well as differences between the views of these two great thinkers. Differences are of serious nature. Even then, these differences can be solved to a certain extent by bringing these two thinkers close to one another in many important matters. Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja have admitted Brahman as the only truth. The world and the individual soul have no existence apart from Brahman. Brahman is to be regarded as the ultimate support of all that we see, feel and touch. It is the substratum of all things which constitute the not-self. Brahman is unique and is

different from all things seen in this world. Both the thinkers, therefore, agree to hold that Brahman cannot be known through perception and inference. Scripture is the source through which Brahman can be realised.

Regarding efficient-material causality of Brahman, both the philosophers hold closely similar views. Brahman, they hold, is not the changeable material stuff of the world. It is the material cause of the world because it is the substratum of the changeable matrix. Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja have described Brahman as the true self of all. Bondage is destroyed when Brahman is realised.

God, in the opinion of both, is the ruler and supporter of the individual souls. It is due to Him that the natural and moral order of the universe have been brought together. It is God who creates the natural order in accordance with the accumulated merits and demerits of the individual souls.

Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja have described the path of devotion as the suitable path for the attainment of God. According to both, devotion is not divorced from knowledge. It is the knowledge of God that changes itself into divine love in devotion.

### *Differences*

We may consider the points of difference between the views of these two outstanding personalities. The first thing that strikes us is that Śaṅkara has pinned his faith in Nirguṇa Brahman whereas for Rāmānuja Brahman is Saguṇa. Pure consciousness, devoid of qualities and differences is ātman or Brahman in the advaita philosophy of Śaṅkara; but according to Rāmānuja, Brahman is the knower possessing knowledge as one of his qualities. This is because knowledge and being are not identical according to Rāmānuja. Like substance and its quality, knower and knowledge are also different. Knowledge for him can never exist without being related to an object. Self-revelation of knowledge implies that knowledge reveals itself as well as the object to its substrate, i.e. the soul or the knower. To say that knowledge



exists but does not manifest any object is to say something absurd and inconceivable. It is because the attributive knowledge possesses the power of manifesting an object that it is described as non-inert. This manifestation becomes meaningful only when the object is revealed to a subject. The distinction between knower and knowledge is never falsified in any level of experience. So, if knowledge is regarded as object-revealing, then the subject to whom the object is revealed, is to be regarded as the substratum of knowledge. This attributive knowledge is of the form of *maniprabhā*. Like rays, this attributive knowledge, too, streams out towards an object and reveals it. This ray-like attributive knowledge is changeable in nature as it gets related to objects.

That the knowledge in the stage of bondage is always an object-knowledge having a changeable and attributive nature, has been admitted by Śaṅkara, but in his opinion, the knower of this attributive knowledge is *antaḥkaraṇāvacchinna jīva-caitanya*.

All pervading consciousness, being limited by *antaḥkaraṇa*, appears as a wordly soul. The internal organ reaches the distant object through its mode and *pramātri-caitanya* which is changeable, reaches the external object through *antaḥkaraṇa*. Hence in Śaṅkara vedānta, it is the internal organ that meditates between *jīvacaitanya* and the object and brings them into knowledge-relation. So, there is no need for Śaṅkara to recognise the existence of a ray-like knowledge to bring about the relation between the knower and the known. According to Rāmānuja, the individual soul which is the real knower, is unchangeable. What is changeable is the internal organ. The internal organ alone possesses the capacity of reaching the object—a capacity that is not possessed by the immutable soul. So, to relate the soul to the object, the ray-like attributive knowledge has been introduced in the philosophy of Rāmānuja.

The ray-like attributive knowledge of Rāmānuja is not different from *vṛttijñāna* of Śaṅkar-vedānta so far as its relation to object is concerned. Both these forms of knowledge

are object-revealing and are of value in the empirical stage. We can, therefore, reasonably say that in the stage of bondage, Śaṅkara, too, has admitted the object-revealing character of knowledge like Rāmānuja. The *pramātā* of Śaṅkara is the knower of this knowledge and this knowledge (*vṛttijñāna*) is a quality of *pramātā*—the substratum. Whether in the empirical stage, we call this object-revealing attributive knowledge *prabhā* or *vṛtti* does not make much difference if we were to understand it from the philosophical point of view.

In the stage of liberation, however, no object-revealing knowledge is apprehended according to Advaita-vedānta. Rāmānuja, on the contrary, holds that attributive knowledge exists in its pure form in the liberated soul also. If we think of the position of the attributive knowledge in the stage of liberation as expounded in the Qualified Monism, we find that although the ray-like knowledge exists in this stage, it is of no use from the practical point of view. This is because in the liberated stage, there is no other object of knowledge except God and since God is not an external or distant object, ray-like knowledge here does not perform the function that it generally performs in the bound state. Since the liberated soul does not know any natural object, it ceases to be a knower in the wordly sense. Even if we describe the liberated soul as knowledge, we do not make any mistake. It may, however, be said that although the ray-like knowledge has no obvious use in the liberated stage, knowledge is not objectless. God Himself becomes the object of knowledge of the liberated soul. It may be explained that ordinarily by object of knowledge we mean a natural object which is known through the internal organ. But in God-knowledge, the internal organ does not function. Moreover *Īśvara-viṣaya* means *Īśvara-sambandha* and this relation to God exists also in the stage of bondage. Hence, when liberated, the soul does not know any new object.

It may be argued that Śaṅkara has not admitted the existence of two principles in the state of liberation and so the

question of subject-object relationship does not arise at all in his philosophy. But Rāmānuja has admitted the existence of two principles in the stage of liberation. Though Rāmānuja has admitted the existence of two principles, he has also admitted *parama sāmya*, (highest affinity) between the two (one atomic and the other all-pervading). For this reason it is difficult for us to detect whether there is one or two. Both God and soul are principles of illumination. If a principle of illumination which is atomic in nature remains in close proximity to a principle of illumination which is all-pervading, then the separate existence of the atomic light cannot be distinguished at all. Both the philosophers have described Brahmaprāpti as *ānanda-prāpti*. The question that crops up in this connection is, do we realise in the final stage differenceless infinite bliss or do we realise God who is full of bliss?

In the stage of bondage, Śaṅkara, too has felt the necessity of worshipping a loving God who is a creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. This creator-God is the indwelling soul of all things and beings and He possesses lordly powers and auspicious qualities. All actions of the Jīvas become effective only when these are approved of by God. With the help of His potential power, God has created this world for the enjoyment of the souls. He arouses devotion in the mind of a Jīva. He is the giver of the fruits of actions. In all these respects, Śaṅkara's conception of God does not differ from that of Rāmānuja.

The speciality of Śaṅkara lies in the fact that he has recognised a Nirguṇ stage beyond the *saguṇ* one. In his opinion liberation is attained only when there is "aikya" (oneness with this *nirguṇatattva*). To be one with-truth, the individual soul has to go beyond Brahmaloaka which is not the last limit of the soul's spiritual journey.

In the opinion of Rāmānuja, too, the liberated soul goes beyond Brahmaloaka to reach the abode of Viṣṇu; but the final stage is a stage on the attainment of which the liberated

soul does not lose its existence and individuality ; on the contrary, *Muktātmā* gains access to God who is its ultimate refuge.

If we reflect upon the real nature of the *saguṇa-prāpti*, we find that according to Rāmānuja also, the soul here gets rid of all natural imperfections, the removal of which calls for Divine help. The liberated soul possesses qualities like *sarvajñatva*, *satys.mkalpatva* etc. and is also capable of attaining everything by mere wish. So in this stage, the liberated soul is free from all natural qualities and is not in need of any substantial help from God. Divine kindness and compassion are no longer necessary to help the liberated soul in his onward journey. There is, therefore, no scope for the manifestation of the auspicious qualities of God in relation to a liberated soul. In such circumstances, recognition or non-recognition of qualities in the ultimate being is of not much value from the philosophical point of view. In the stage of bondage, of course, need for devotion to a qualified one has been recognised by Śaṅkara. So, when the soul is on the way to liberation, it clings to a qualified God ; both the philosophers hold this view. The final stage is, however, a stage in which, although God of Rāmānuja is present, there is no scope for the manifestation of the beneficial qualities of God in regard to the liberated soul. From philosophical point of view, therefore it is very difficult for us to determine conclusively whether the final stage is a stage of oneness with *nirgunatattva* or a stage where the liberated soul attains similarity with *saguṇa-tattva*.

Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja have admitted that for the realisation of *saguṇatattva*, devotion is the most suitable path. Devotion, too, has been regarded by both as being of the nature of knowledge. While commenting on the *Gītā* 12.3 ( where prayer to akṣara Brahman has been mentioned ) Śaṅkara has stated :

Upāsanam nama yathā śāstram upāsyasya arthasya viśayīka-  
raṇena sāmīpyam upagamya tailadhāravat samānapratyaya-  
pravāheṇa dīrghakālam yad āsanam tad upāsanam ācāksate.



For Rāmānuja also, Bhakti and upāsana are synonymous terms and he has described devotion as

Tailadhārāvadavicchinna smṛti santānarūpā dhruvā smṛtiḥ 1  
Śrībhāṣya/1/18

Rāmānuja, however, believes in the existence of a qualified being serving as the resting place of the liberated soul even in the stage of *paramukti*. Here one may ask ; what is it that is being realised by the liberated soul in the final stage ? If it is asserted that the soul realises the true form of God, then a further question may be asked : why this true form of God which is eternally present is not realised by the soul in the state of bondage ? If we say in reply that due to *Pratibhandhaka*, the true form of God is not realised, then we have to assume something like Śaṅkara's *avidyā*.

According to Rāmānuja, the soul in the final stage exists in its pure form being devoid of all natural conditions and God is also realised in its pure eternal form. These two *tattvas* exist in body-soul relation. The individual soul does not merge in God but becomes similar to God and remains in inseparable relation with him. According to some interpreters of Śaṅkara-vedānta<sup>1</sup>, a liberated soul attains God-hood and remains in that state waiting for the liberation of all souls in bondage. When all souls will be liberated and all *upādhis* will be destroyed, then and then only difference between the soul and God will come to an end. To believe in *jīva* assuming the form of God or to assert that the atomic soul which has become similar to God remains in an inseparable union with him, does not make much difference. All these points provide much food for thought and I sincerely believe that open-mindedness and unbiased researches in these respects will enable the next generation to find a closer relation between Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja from philosophical point of view.

1. Siddhānta-leśha-saṅgraha—4/5/3/1

(Translation by Swami Gambhīrananda), p. 259  
Published by Udvodhana Karyalaya, Calcutta.

## MEANING OF ADVAITA ACCORDING TO VIJNANA BHIKṢU

Vijñāna Bhikṣu who belonged to the latter part of the sixteenth century A. D. wrote a commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa. His object was to bring Brahma-Sūtra into a harmonious relation with all the orthodox systems of ancient Indian philosophy, because in his opinion, real antagonism exists between orthodox systems and heterodox systems only. One orthodox system is in no way radically opposed to another orthodox system.

Being a philosopher of a true synthetic outlook, he had also tried to prove that the roots of all orthodox systems could be traced to the Upaniṣads. So far as the Sāṅkhya philosophy was concerned, he primarily tried to prove that the said system was not atheistic. The Sāṅkhya philosophy, too, could be based on the *Brahma-Sūtra* and could be brought in line with the Advaita philosophy. In his opinion, the word '*advaita*' has not been used in its proper sense by Śaṅkara, as a result of which a false gulf has been created between the Sāṅkhya and the Vedānta philosophy. If the word *advaita* could be used in its right sense, then there would not have been any difficulty in comprehending fully the harmony between the Sāṅkhya-Yoga and the Vedānta philosophy.

According to Vijñāna Bhikṣu, the word '*advaita*' does not imply the absolute non-difference between the individual soul and Brahman ; nor does it assert the unreality of the *Jīvas*. He has used the word '*advaita*' to mean *avibhāga*, or non-separableness between Brahman and the individual soul. Like Rāmānuja, he has also admitted the reality of the three *tattvas*—Prakṛti Puruṣa, and God. Prakṛti is the unconscious dynamic principle and Puruṣa is the static principle of pure consciousness ; both of them are brought together by God

as a result of which the creative disturbance of the three *gunas* takes place in the bosom of Nature immediately (*asmābhistu prakṛtipuruṣasamyoga īśvareṇa kriyate*, I.1.2.)

According to dualistic and atheistic Sāṅkhya, Prakṛti is independent and its dynamism is due to its own nature. According to Bhikṣu, however, cosmology is a cosmic history of Puruṣa and Prakṛti which are brought together for creative purposes by God. Puruṣa and Prakṛti are independent of each other, but they are to act jointly for the creation of a purposeful world. The joining together of spirit and matter is possible, only because both of them rest on a common substratum, i. e. God.

It is clear from the writings of Bhikṣu that he is not at all in favour of accepting a single differenceless Brahman as the sole reality ; nor is he in favour of admitting this world as a play of two wholly independent principles, like spirit and matter of any dualistic system. In his opinion, an unconscious principle cannot, of its own accord, enter into an effective and creative relation with Pure Consciousness. This must be done by a spiritual being higher than both Puruṣa and Prakṛti. The greatness of God and the littleness of both man and the world do not suggest a theory of absolute non-dualism; on the other hand, the very conception of God as the substratum of both man and the world prevents us from imagining a separable relationship between God and either of the two *tattvas*, i. e., spirit and matter. The creative process in Nature begins at the will of God. Prakṛti has no independent teleological power by dint of which it can move and change of its own accord. Both Prakṛti and Puruṣa are energies of God and, as such, they have no existence apart from Him. Prakṛti is the changeable stuff of the universe. Puruṣa is the ground of all sorts of world-experience (*bhogāśraya*), and God is the ultimate substratum of both Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Both Puruṣa and Prakṛti remain indistinguishably merged in God prior to creation, and this indistinguishable

union of the three *tattvas* is what has been described as 'advaita' in the Upaniṣads. God, according to Bhikṣu, is the substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the material and the efficient cause of the world, the *sākṣin* of all and is also the *amśin* of which the individual self is the *amśa*. In each of these aspects, the relation of 'avibhāga' holds true between God and the other two *tattvas*, and this sense of *avibhāga* is the proper sense in which the Advaita Śruti texts should be understood.

### *God as the Adhiṣṭhāna-Kāraṇa*

According to Bhikṣu, *adhiṣṭhāna-kāraṇa* (substratum) is that which, by remaining inseparably related (*avibhaktam*) to the real and changeable material cause, prompts the latter to create the cosmic order.<sup>1</sup> The *adhiṣṭhāna-kāraṇa* is also that in which all things remain in a non-manifested, subtle condition (*yasmin layam yāti*) at the time of dissolution. Both these characteristics belong to God only and not to any other being. Further, He is also the ultimate Being into which the individual souls enter in the state of final realization. The goal is 'sāyujya' and not 'aikya' with Brahman. In whatever way God is looked at, there is always this relation of inseparability (*avibhāga*) between Him and Puruṣa and Prakṛti.

Although God is the *adhiṣṭhāna-kāraṇa*, and in this sense, is also called the original cause, still His causality is not to be understood in the ordinary sense of the causality of a modifiable principle.

God is the unmodifiable principle of pure consciousness which vitalizes Prakṛti by His presence as the only witnessing self of the pre-evolutionary stage. Prakṛti, in its essence is pure potentiality which can evolve into definite categories of the world only through its relation with the Puruṣa. This association between Puruṣa and Prakṛti or pure potentiality and consciousness is possible due to the presence of Divine

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1. *Vijñānāmṛta-bhāṣya*. I. 1. 2. Chowkhamba Publications, p. 32.



Consciousness which shines in its full glory through the three stages of creation, preservation, and dissolution of the world. The conception of God as the vitalizing principle of the modifiable stuff of the world is also present in the philosophy of Śaṅkara. God in the Śaṅkara-Vedānta is Brahman reflected in Māyā and it is due to the reflection of consciousness in Māyā that the blind *upādhi* of God changes at once into an active potentiality of a meaningful creation. Brahman dissociated from Māyā is simply the differenceless and static consciousness. God of Bhikṣu is pure consciousness associated with *śuddha-sattva* which is His *nitya-upādhi*. God is able to think or will through the instrument of *śuddha-sattva* alone. In His true nature, God is only pure consciousness devoid of all forms of agency.

Like Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, Bhikṣu, too, has ascribed the power of vitalizing the material stuff of the world to God, but while Rāmānuja has admitted this power as an *aiśvarya* of the highest Being, and Śaṅkara has described it as phenomenal and false from the transcendental point of view, Bhikṣu has sought an intermediate position between the two. In essence, his God is devoid of all qualities and power which actually belong to His *upādhi*; but since His *upādhi* is eternal, all qualities and powers are always ascribable to Him.

### *God as the Material and the Efficient Cause.*

Since God is the substratum of the modifiable stuff of the world, God is also called the material cause (*upādāna kāraṇa*) of the world. The word '*upādāna*' has, however, been used here in a sense which is entirely different from the sense in which modifiable Prakṛti is the *upādāna* of the world. Since the foundational principle cannot be separated from that of which it is the foundation, God cannot be separated from the world. The real modifiable stuff of the world is Prakṛti, but God as the substratum of both Prakṛti and the world has been described as the *upādāna-kāraṇa* of the world (*vikārikāraṇavād-*

*adhiṣṭhāna-kāraṇasyāpyupādanatvavyavahārāt*). Where non-separableness between the cause and the effect is due to the relation of inherence, there the cause is a changeable one ; but the cause is simply the unmodifiable substratum of the effect where, though non-separable from the effect, it is still not related to it by the relation of inferences. *Ākāśa* is the *upādāna-kāraṇa* of the air only in the sense of its unmodifiable and inseparable substratum. The real modifiable cause of the air is *sparsātanmātra*. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers have described this type of causality as the efficient causality of God. According to Bhikṣu, however, the *adhiṣṭhāna-kāraṇatva* of God is different from *nimitta-kāraṇatva* since, in the latter case, the efficient cause can be separated from the effect. The foundational principle, on the other hand, can never be separated from the effect that is grounded on it. So Bhikṣu has mentioned four forms of causes : (1) *samavāyī*, (2) *asamavāyī*, (3) *nimitta-kāraṇa* and (4) *adhiṣṭhānakāraṇa*.

When God is spoken of as the efficient cause of the world, then also, the efficient causality of God refers simply to His witnessing character (*sūryavat sākṣitāmātreṇa jñānadvāraiva nimitta-kāraṇam Brahma*). The *sūtra* '*Janmādyasya yataḥ*', refers to God as the unmodifiable and inseparable substratum, and it is only in this sense that the epithet of material causality has been ascribed to Him. In Himself, God is only pure, static consciousness, but since He is never separated from its *upādhi* in the form of *śuddha-sattva*, the agency, activity, etc. which belong to the *upādhi* are also attributed to God. Here, God is not the unmodifiable ground of falsehood or appearance as has been admitted by Śaṅkara. On the contrary, He is the unmodified substratum of a real world that has been evolved from a real changeable cause in the form of *Prakṛti*. At the time of dissolution, *Prakṛti* ceases to have any activity and it also becomes subtle and indistinguishable from God. This is the meaning of *prakṛtilaya* : *Prakṛti*, the real cause of a real world, is never destroyed. *Puruṣa*, too, in this state, withdraws all its epistemological activities and this

inoperative state of Puruṣa is what is meant by the mergence of Puruṣa in God. These facts show that during the state of dissolution, God remains inseparable and indistinguishable from Puruṣa and Prakṛti. This indistinguishable union of the three *tattvas* is what is described in the Śruti as 'advaita'.

Again, when one soul is liberated, other souls remain in a bound condition. So, Prakṛti remains in existence and continues to work for the benefit of the bound souls. The activities of Prakṛti come to an end in respect of the released soul only. That particular Prakṛti which is meant solely for the enjoyment of the soul that has been released becomes very subtle and gets merged in its substratum (i. e. God). The released soul also enters into God and remains indistinguishable from Him. Hence in the state of release too there is *advaita* or the relation of *avibhāga* between the three *tattvas*.

### *God as the Witnessing Consciousness*

According to Bhikṣu, God is to be regarded as the prime witnessing consciousness, since prior to creation, there remains no other principle which can possess the attribute of *sākṣitva*. Unless this *sākṣitva* is attributed to God who is the sole principle of revelation in the pre-evolutionary stage, creation of the world cannot be explained.

### *God as Amśin and the Individual soul as the Amśa of Him*

Since God is the primary principle of consciousness, He has been described by Bhikṣu as the *amśin* from whom the individual souls are derived as so many sparks from a single fire. Like sparks, they too resemble God in so far as they are of the nature of consciousness. Although the souls have separate being, still they have no separate and independent existence of their own. Both Puruṣa and Prakṛti exist in God who brings them together at the time of creation. God, as the supreme principle, shoulders the sole responsibility for the creation, maintenance, and destruction

of the world. *Amśatva* implies truly the *sajāñiyatva* of God and also the inseparableness of the individual soul from God. The words 'sampat', 'laya', etc., too, mean nothing but non-separableness (*avibhāga*). The objection that partless Brahman cannot have parts is not sound, since in actual life, the son is always regarded as a part of the father. There is also *avibhāga* between the father and the son in the sense that the son will always remain related to his father by the relation of sonship throughout the whole period of his existence. The two together will constitute a single family unit, in spite of their having separate beings of their own.<sup>1</sup> It is because the individual is a part of God only in the sense in which the son is a part of the father that there is no difficulty in admitting the soul, too, as *vibhu*. When the infinite soul manifests itself through its *upādhi*, it appears as finite and limited.

From the above discussions, it can be reasonably held that according to Bhikṣu, the word 'advaita' has been used in the Śruti texts with a view to proclaiming clearly that both Puruṣa and Prakṛti rest solely and wholly on Brahman which is their *adhiṣṭhāna* or the ground-principle. In the absence of this *sadādhīṣṭhāna*, the co-operation of two principles having separate *sattā* and separate *sthiti* cannot be logically explained.

Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja have also admitted Brahman as the *adhiṣṭhāna-kāraṇa*, but the sense in which Bhikṣu has spoken of Brahman as the *adhiṣṭhāna* is different from that of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. According to Śaṅkara, Brahman is only the *adhiṣṭhāna* of illusion. It is not the substratum of any metaphysically real power. In Rāmānuja, on the other hand, we find that Brahman is the *adhiṣṭhāna-kāraṇa* of *cit* and *acit* both of which are regulated, controlled, and guided by this highest Reality. Just as the car driver is the



ruler of the car, in the same manner Brahman is the ruler of both *cit* and *acit*. In the opinion of Bhikṣu however, it is only as the primary foundational principle of revelation that Brahman is regarded as the sole substratum of all things and beings of the world. All powers and glories really belong to *śuddha-sattva* which is the *nitya upādhi* of the ultimate Reality.

In fact, Bhikṣu has not made any distinction, like Śaṅkara, between Saguṇa Brahman and Nirguṇa Brahman, as belonging to two different levels of existence and reality. In his opinion, although Brahman, in essence, is pure and *nirguṇa* yet being eternally associated with the adjunct in the form of *śuddhasattva* in which *viśvākārā-vṛtti* is eternally present, the highest Being assumes for all time the role of a revealer and manifests the *sāttvika-vṛtti* of the world-form by His own light. Thus according to Bhikṣu Brahman and Īśvara do not belong to two different levels of reality. The representation of Brahman as God is not a concession to the weakness of the ignorant mind. Both are equally real. When Brahman is thought of apart from the *upādhi*, the highest Reality is *nirguṇa* and when it is thought of along with its *upādhi* which comprises powers and glories, Brahman is legitimately described as the omnipotent God. Brahman, in the philosophy of Rāmaṇuja, however, is always a qualified one and is the ruler and supervisor of the whole universe.

Further, the word *avibhāga* used by Bhikṣu to mean *advaita* has a connotation slightly different from the connotation of the expression '*apṛthaksiddhi*' used by Rāmaṇuja in his philosophy of Viśiṣṭadvaita. Of course, the word *apṛthaksiddhi* or inseparableness has been used by Rāmaṇuja in his philosophy with a view to explaining the organic unity of the three *tattvas*—*cit*, *acit* and Īśvara ; but this inseparableness (existing between *cit*, *acit*, and Īśvara) is, in his opinion, identical with the inseparable relation existing between the body and the soul of a living being. Here, if

one wishes, one can perceive soul and body as different, although from the practical point of view, the soul and the body are generally treated as one. The oneness or unity established between *cit*, *acit*, and *Īśvara* by the body-soul relation exists in the same manner in both the unmanifested and manifested conditions of the world. Even in the state of release, this unity continues to hold good from the standpoint of the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy. According to Bhikṣu, however, the unity created by *avibhāga* exists only in the unmanifested condition, when Brahman alone is felt and the other two *tattvas* (*Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*), being devoid of their activities, remain merged in the supreme Reality. In the manifested condition, the relation between Brahman and the two other *tattvas* is not like the relation of an indistinguishable union created by throwing the water of a jar in a pond; on the other hand, the relation of *avibhāga* then resembles the relation of inseparableness existing between the father and his son as both of them constitute one family unit.

Here, it can be pointed out very cogently that non-difference or oneness existing between the father and the son is less prominent than the non-difference which is admitted to exist between the body and the soul from the practical point of view. The father and the son possess different bodies and their experiences of pleasures and pains are also different. So, from this point of view, Bhikṣu's explanation of *advaita* in the manifested condition of the world is not very satisfying.

In fact, Bhikṣu has introduced God in his philosophy simply as a static principle of revelation. He is not the real creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world. All activities, all thoughts, and all feelings belong to His *prakṛtimūlakapādhi* only. Hence, although *Prakṛti* has been assigned a sub-ordinate status, still because of the essentially inactive nature of Bhikṣu's Brahman, the independence of *Prakṛti* has been maintained to a very great extent in his philosophy. God is only the *sākṣin*, a mere revealing principle. The

vitalization of pure potentiality by consciousness is necessary even in the pre-evolutionary stage and so God has been introduced in the philosophy of Bhikṣu primarily with a view to satisfying this very essential need. In his opinion, it is not proper to describe the philosophy of Sāṅkhya in an atheistic manner, because in the pre-evolutionary stage, it is the consciousness of God alone that can account for the intelligization of the unconscious potentiality of Prakṛti for the creation of this world, which is the moral stage for the spiritual development of so many individual souls.



## **MEANING OF IMMORTALITY IN UPANISADS AND VEDANTA**

The word "immortality" generally refers to the eternity of the soul which does not come to an end when the body dies. The body belongs to this mortal world but not the soul. So even when a body dies, the soul that resides in it, continues its existence either here or elsewhere where joy and misery result according to its own deserts. Immortality, thus, follows as a necessary consequence of the Upaniṣadic premise : the soul is eternal.

### *Not a Dogmatic Concept*

The eternality of the soul is also not a dogmatic assumption of the ancient Indian philosophy. The soul, according to traditional Hindu philosophy, refers to the principle of consciousness in living beings and this consciousness seems to be fundamental in the sense that with its help alone everything in the universe becomes known to us. Even the sun and the moon which scatter light to reveal objects, cannot be known or cognised without consciousness.

This principle of consciousness has not been identified with intellect owing to the fact that intellectual modifications undergo changes and these changes presuppose some unchangeable principle as the basis ; otherwise, different mental states happening in different points of time, cannot be united in the total experience of a single person.

Consequently, memory, recognition etc. which are concerned with facts happening at different times, cannot be satisfactorily explained. The underlying and uniting principle is the soul or pure consciousness which reveals all changing modifications of the intellect and makes them appear as objects,



So "intellect" falls on the side of the object and not on the side of the subject or consciousness. The revelation of intellectual modifications as objects is a fact of experience, and therefore, these modifications which need a revealing principle other than themselves, cannot be regarded as fundamental or ultimate.

So, pure consciousness is ultimate and not the intellect. This pure consciousness is self-revealing and it never becomes an object of cognition like the various modifications of the intellect. Since the soul or the principle of pure consciousness is the knower of all sorts of worldly experiences, it is unchangeable: because one who is in change, cannot perceive change.

In order to appreciate the two different states—say new and old—of one and the same object, the Individual must continue to exist at different periods of time and must have a belief in his personal identity. The soul is, therefore, unchangeable and permanent.

Now, this unchangeability of the soul leads to the assumption of its eternality. If a thing is unchangeable, that means it is trans-temporal or eternal. This eternal nature of the soul is its essential character, although in its worldly life, this character is hidden from us owing to beginningless ignorance. To gain back this eternality of one's own soul is to *become Immortal*. All other things of the world are changeable and mortal. It is only the soul which is ultimate, unchangeable and therefore both eternal and immortal.

### *Self realisation*

Immortality is, thus, synonymous with self-realisation, emancipation or liberation. It is because *amritatva* refers to self-realisation which can be had only through wisdom and meditation as explained by *Yajnavalkya* in reply to *Maitrey's* question that there is never any prospect of Immortality through wealth or worldly materials, (*amritatvasya tu nashasti vitteneti*),

Worldly gains and worldly enjoyments are of use to us only in this empirical life. They cannot lead us to self-realisation or Immortality. It is only by studying scriptures and by following the instructions of the scriptures in the worldly life that a man can remove all sorts of impurities from his mind and with a mind thus purified, he is able to have a direct experience of Immortality which is the supreme goal of his life. Immortal life is, thus, the free and true life of the spirit which the spirit gains back when the artificial connection with the worldly life or its false sense of identity with mind and body is completely destroyed.

### *Two forms of Immortality*

Such Immortality, however, may be either personal or impersonal. Both the forms have been described in the Upaniṣads as a result of which Vedānta opinion has developed in two different manners. The believers in personal immortality hold that when the soul regains its true form, it is lifted to the region of God and lives in His constant companionship.

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, for example, it has been stated that an immortal individual is lifted to the region of God whom he has worshipped with devotion, love and respect : in the abode of God, the liberated soul experiences all sorts of pleasures which exist in that region. Again, the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad says that one enjoys immortality, when by becoming pure, one lives in the pleasant companionship of God who is the Highest Reality. All these passages advocate personal immortality.

According to the theory of personal immortality, a liberated soul on attaining an immortal life, loses its natural body and appears in its own divine form and divine character. In this stage, the soul becomes completely free from influences of all his virtues and vices and becomes similar to God in respect of its nature as Pure Consciousness. (Muṇḍaka 3-1-3.)

Liberation, however, does not mean emergence of any new quality. The soul being free from the defects of ignorance, gains back its natural luminosity and shines forth in its own

immortal glory. This type of personal immortality has been advocated by Rāmānuja and his followers who believe in the essential difference between the individual soul and God.

### *Impersonal Immortality*

There are other passages in the Upaniṣads which may very well be interpreted in favour of an impersonal immortality. In the Bṛhad Upaniṣad, for example, it has been stated that the rivers when flowing into the sea, lose their different names and forms and become one with the sea. In the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, it has been stated that a liberated soul becomes mingled after death with the whole universe. All these passages have been interpreted by Śaṅkara to mean "absorption in Brahman".

Śaṅkara believes that the individual self is in reality identical with Brahman. It is ignorance that hides this truth from a man's view and makes him appear as a limited person. When through long and devoted study of the Vedānta, the individual directly realises the truth that the soul is identical with Brahman, it ceases to have an independent personality of its own. The individual soul then becomes the Truth or merges in the Truth. One who knows Brahman, becomes Brahman which is *sat, cit and ānanda*.

### *Immortality—A Bliss*

This immortal state has also been described in the Vedānta as a state of infinite bliss. According to Śaṅkara, Brahman is existence, consciousness and bliss. Since the soul is identical with Brahman, it is also unlimited consciousness and bliss. Therefore, when the soul gains back its true nature and is merged in Brahman, it becomes *amṛita, ānanda* or bliss.

Thus, if the word *amṛita* is understood to mean the highest form of happiness, then also it has reference to the soul and the highest reality. The thing that gives us highest pleasure is the soul, because we find that a worldly-object becomes dear to a person only when it is related to his soul. Wealth,

not owned by me does not give me any pleasure. The huge bank balance of a stranger is no cause for joy to me. I shall, however, feel pleased if the cash is deposited in my name.

Similarly, the son of an unknown person is not a pleasure to me. It is my own son who can give me most pleasure. This is why *Yajnavalkya* has said : "Verily the husband is dear to the wife not for the sake of the husband, my dear, but it is for her own sake that he is dear. Verily, the wife is dear to the husband not for the sake of the wife, my dear, but it is for his own sake that she is dear".

Now, since a thing becomes pleasant and desirable by getting related to the soul the soul must be of infinite bliss. Otherwise, it would not have been possible for the soul to make pleasant anything that gets related to it. Therefore, even if by *amrita* we mean bliss or happiness then also the word applies to the soul.

From this sense of *amrita*, too, the indestructibility and eternality of the soul can be derived. A thing that is destructible cannot be an object of infinite pleasure because of its destructible nature. The highest form of love can only have for its object an eternal entity which can serve as the never-ending source of pleasure. The object of the highest love cannot be material for a material object is dependent on consciousness for its manifestation and as such is inferior to consciousness.

That which is of an inferior nature cannot give us the highest form of pleasure when the superior one is also present. The soul being of the nature of consciousness, is therefore *amrita* or the object of the highest form of love. It is also independent and as such is self-revealing. It does not depend on anything else for its existence or revelation.

#### *State of Liberation*

In fact, Śaṅkara has admitted that the state of liberation is not only a state of non-duality but it is also a state of blissful existence. According to Rāmānuja, however, the state of liberation is a state of dual existence, if considered



ontologically. But psychologically, due to the presence of love, the individual soul feels as if it has become one with God. This consciousness of union and constant companionship with him is the source of infinite bliss to the liberated soul.

God is immeasurable *amrita* and the soul is also *amrita*.

Hence the state of liberation which is a state of communion between God and the individual soul is also a state of infinite bliss and happiness. The individual soul is completely immersed in the enjoyment of the bliss or *amrita* of God which is the Truest and the Highest self. In facts, Divine Love is nothing but the immortal bliss of emancipation and spiritual freedom.

When we reflect carefully on the idea of Immortality, we come to realise that on the evidence of the gradual expansion of the soul in different stages of our worldly-life, we can reasonably believe in its eternal existence extending beyond the barriers of space and time.

### *Expansion of Self*

A child, for example, has a vague consciousness of self. The self of the child remains confined to the body only and cannot even be identified with other members of the family. In this state, the self remains confined to the present time only and cannot stretch itself to cover the future. The child is conscious of the present needs and never tries to make provision for the future. When the child grows into a boy, the soul becomes more expanded. The boy can identify himself with his brothers, sisters, school friends etc ; although he is incapable of thinking of remote future, he can do so with regard to near future. Thus the soul is spreading itself beyond the narrow temporal and spatial limitations of childhood.

Again, an adult person is capable of thinking not only of his own life, but also of the life of his children who are parts and parcels of his own self and through whose life, his life is to be continued in an unbroken chain. Here, the

self-knowledge of the adult is fuller and richer than the self-knowledge of a small boy or of a little child. Thus, in our worldly life, we find that expansion of self takes place simultaneously with the advancement in knowledge.

In view of what is stated above, there is justification for our belief in an eternal and immortal soul voiced by the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta. When the knowledge of an individual is purified and perfected, he is capable of realising the eternality and the immortality of the soul in a clear manner. The soul in that state is truly felt to be beyond all spatial and temporal limitations. This is the final truth which an unwise man can neither find nor conceive of.

### *Immortality of Soul*

Amid diverse mysteries of the world, immortality of the soul is one which can be solved through wisdom only and not through imperfect intellectual knowledge. The very fact that a child cannot realise fully the extension of his self beyond the present, does not keep its self confined to the present time only : in the same manner, the imperfect understanding of an ordinary person does not really offer enough ground for refuting the eternality and immortality of the soul which have been fully and clearly comprehended by the saints and prophets of different ages.

The lust for life is not the source of our belief in immortality. It is the recognition of consciousness as the universal and the fundamental principle that logically leads us to accept the theory of an immortal self. This Eternal and Infinite Consciousness is the One Absolute Certainty upon which rests the whole of this world.

Again, if we push our enquiry far back and try to find out the cause for this lust for life, then also we find that the cause is nothing but this blissful nature of the soul. In the living state, the soul remains associated with the sense-organs as a result of which a person enjoys the happiness of the

*ātma-bhāva* : at death, however, the connection of the self with the sense-organs comes to an end and *ātmānanda* (happiness of the soul) too vanishes at once. It is this desire for the persistent enjoyment of the happiness of *ātman* that really lies at the root of our lust for life. From all that we have said above, it is easy to conclude that the soul is of the nature of *amrita* by gaining which man realises his perfection, divinity and blissful existence.



## MEANING OF YOGA IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF BHAGAVAD GITA

The word Yoga in the Gītā does not seem to stand for the “Astānga Yoga” of *Patanjali* where it has been used in the special sense of cessation of mental states. This technical sense of the word does not seem to have been adopted by the author of the Gītā in the exposition of his own doctrine and ideal. The distinction in meaning of the word “Yoga” in the Gītā and the Yoga Sūtra is so clear and definite that not a single interpreter of the Bhagavad Gītā has ever adhered to the technical sense of *Patanjali*.

In the Bhagvad Gītā the word Yoga has been used in different senses in different contexts. When used with sām-khya and Bhakti, the word seems to mean association or union. Sām-khya in the Gītā means pursuit of true knowledge or wisdom. It has been stated that the Sām-khyas (wisemen) attain liberation by following the path of unwavering and steady devotion. Both Śankara and Śridharasvāmī have taken the word “Sām-khyānam” in the sense of wise people. These wise people are born, as it were, with a thorough and clear knowledge of *ātman* and their earnest devotion to knowledge helps them to renounce worldly pleasures for the sake of the highest truth. Such is also the goal reached by the devoted persons or “*Bhakti-Yukta Puruṣas*”.

### *Association with Karma*

The word Yoga has also been used in association with Karma. For example, *Karma yogena Yoginām*, *Karmayogamaśakta*, *Sannyāsā Karma Yogaśca Karmayogena Cāpare* etc. Here the word does not seem to have been used in the former sense of union in any one of these contexts. In “*Karmayogena Yoginām*”, the suggestion apparently is not that man can attain liberation by performing actions or by becoming *Karma-Yukta*: because in that case all persons



should be able to achieve liberation and then there would have been no need of a special doctrine of Karma Yoga, as expounded by Śrīkrishna. "*Karmayogamaśakta*" refers to one who is incapable of practising Karma-Yoga. In "*Sannyāsa Karmayogaśca*" Karma-Yoga seems to refer to a special method of performing actions for attaining the highest goal. In "*Karmayogena Cāpare*" too, Yoga seems to have a similar reference. The meaning of Yoga used in all these contexts will become clear to us if we take into consideration the meaning of the sentence "*Yogah Karmaṣu kauśalam*" i.e. Yoga means some special skill for performing actions in worldly life: this speciality consisting in—renunciation of the fruits of action. This skill is needed for the attainment of the stability or balance of mind without which a man will not be able to free himself from the shackles of Karma and bondage. Ordinary people of the world are passionate, ambitious, easily affected by joys and sorrows, gains or loss. They generally perform actions, driven by desire and attachment. The desires and attachment disturb the equality of mind and so desire-prompted actions strengthen the bond of man and prevents him from attaining liberation.

### *Gītā & Karma Yoga*

Every action in ordinary course springs from desire and results in impressions which become the seeds of future activities and desires. In other words, we can say that every action is followed by corresponding reaction and this law of action and reaction is called the law of Karma or the law of cause and effect. So long as a man remains bound to this law of Karma he performs various activities and thus goes on weaving his own cobweb of birth and death. So the question naturally arises: Is there no way out of this whirlpool of birth, death and new birth? The followers of the path of renunciation suggest that giving up of all actions is the only means for destroying the bonds of Karma. Since one Karma leads to another and thereby sows the seeds of a new life, it is best to become completely inactive. But giving up

of all actions on a mass scale is not at all advisable and practicable from the worldly point of view. Social life and social stability will be at stake if everybody refrains from doing action. Absolute inactivity means death. For preserving body and mind, activity is needed. Again for propagation of species, activity is needed: In fact, life sustains on activity. So the author of the Gītā refrains from speaking in favour of complete inactivity. On the other hand, he opens a new avenue, brings new messages of hope and light for human being by expounding his theory of Yoga in Karma. It is not the external as such that really binds a man to worldly life, it is the desire—the mental stage of human action—that pollutes his spiritual being and dislocates him from his real status. Attachment, anger and greed are the three gates of hell that veil wisdom as smoke covers fire. Karma-Yoga, therefore, with its emphasis on the disinterested performance of worldly duties provides human beings with a new path of emancipation and freedom. No human being can live without performing some kind of action and the Gītā seeks to show how, by means of Karma Yoga, this constant output of energy may be utilised by human beings to attain to perfection and release from transmigration. The special art of performing one's duties is the art of keeping oneself absolutely disinterested in and non-attached to worldly pleasures and pains. When the mind runs in madness after the objects of senses, the intellectual background is disturbed and so the mind fails to proceed in its course, fixed for the attainment of knowledge and freedom. By controlling senses, however, one can secure the equability of mind which is needed for achieving wisdom and perfection. Attachment to worldly objects are formed by continued association with sense-objects and attachment leads to desire. The person who indulges in sense gratifications moves in the cycle of birth and death. Giving up of attachment and controlling the senses, therefore, constitute the indispensable pre-condition for communion with God and the fulfilment of

this pre-condition in action is Karma-Yoga. Mere physical inactivity without a corresponding control of senses and cessation from nursing passions and desires in mind, is a bad and vicious path. The author of the Gītā has repeatedly remarked that the proper way of doing actions is to dissociate one's mind from desires and attachment. The effects of any action can bind the doer only when in doing that action he has a selfish motive to realise. But if he does not seek anything for himself and performs the action disinterestedly, his work will not affect him in any way. A man should therefore, give up all his desires for selfish motives and dedicate all his actions to God and still go on performing all the ordinary duties of life. This is Yoga in action as expounded in the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gītā. To be unselfish, non-attached and disinterested in worldly gains and losses is the supreme duty of human beings. Disinterested performance of action will produce a change in the personality and outlook of man. *Detachment from self and attachment to God is what the word Yoga actually refers to in the Bhagavad Gītā.* Desire as such is not always bad. It is the nature of the object that determines the moral quality of desire. If the object is self's own pleasure and enjoyment, the desire is to be discarded ; if God, then the man has the purest desire that will bring about his union with the Supreme Reality. Such a person perceives God in all things and all things in God. Men and animals, low and high are the same in his eyes. Caste and creed lose all meaning and significance for him. He has then a broader and a higher vision of man and the universe. The universe for him is a vast sea of Divinity and there is no distinction between man and man. Through his deeper vision, he perceives the Divine Spark in his own self as well as in all other beings and things of the universe. Having realised oneness, he becomes united with God and this union with God is the real Yoga brought about by the performance of the normal duties of life in a purely disinterested and non-attached manner.

## CONCLUSION

In fine, it can be stated that by using the word "Yoga" in a special sense, the Gītā has sought to bring about a harmony between the ordinary life of duties and responsibilities and the supra-ordinary life of divinity and freedom. To feel oneness with the life divine, to practise complete self-surrender to God and consequently to dissociate oneself from ego-centric desires, constitute the full connotation of the word *Yoga*. Dissociation from ego-centric desires is achieved by the performances of disinterested actions: When the shell of one's individuality is thus broken, he realises his identity with the Great Soul and this is the stage of God-Consciousness or Divine Love. This realisation of oneness of spirit is the highest ideal of life and the Gītā seeks to show that this ideal or supra-ordinary state can be achieved by a person even in his normal worldly life by the practice of Yoga (attachment to God and detachment from self.)

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## **HISTORY OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY : ITS RE-ORIENTATIONS**

The need for re-orienting the history of Indian philosophy is greater today because this will enable us to get a comprehensive idea about the culture and heritage of one's country. It is, of course, not possible to study accurately the history of Indian Philosophy of the ancient period because of certain difficulties. In the first place, a thorough chronological recording of thoughts and materials is not possible, because the Indians of that age cared more for the truth realised : obviously, they did not attach any importance to the life and date of the author. In fact, they were more interested in enjoying the fruits and flowers of the tree of religion rather than trying to find out the planter.

The position is, however, quite different if we refer to Western philosophy. While it is easy to give a detailed chronological account of the thought development of a particular philosopher of the Western world, with special reference to his age, date and the extent of indebtedness to the preceding thinkers, it is not so in the field of ancient Indian philosophy. The dates which have so far been collected through the strenuous efforts of many oriental scholars, are uncertain and the periods in which the history of ancient Indian philosophy is generally divided are arbitrary and artificial.

### *Our Heritage*

Happily today, we have become more particular about our own faith and philosophy, culture and civilisation. Today we realise more than anybody else the need for having a command over our own heritage. A mere chronological treatment of philosophical thought is not enough to realise the cultural heritage of a country. A true realisation of Indian culture presupposes an accurate analytico-synthetic

knowledge of all important changes and developments, occurring in the different spheres of Indian life in different ages. In this respect, I find that all standard works on the history of Western philosophy lay stress on the chronological development of philosophical thought, thereby ignoring the socio-political background of that particular age. It is, therefore, felt that the traditional method of writing a history of philosophy needs a change. What is really needed is a new outlook. There should be a new method of approach by which it should be possible to trace, in the first place, the historical development of philosophical thought in the background of major social, political and economic changes.

On the soil of India, prophets and philosophers had appeared from time to time who had given a new method of thinking in the field of philosophy. Their messages were really the cumulative effect of the various factors relating to different aspects of life of that age. For example, we may very well refer to the philosophical teachings of personalities like Lord Buddha and Śaṅkara in the context of social, political and religious conditions of their respective periods.

### *Philosophy of Buddha*

Although Buddhism was regarded as anti-Brāhmanic and anti-Vedic in form and character, closer study reveals otherwise, because it resembles the teachings of the Upaniṣads. In fact, while studying Buddhism, one gains the impression as if he is studying something fully in accordance with the traditional faith, philosophy and religion. I should like to cite examples to show parallelism between Buddhism and the traditional Vedic thoughts.

The sages of the Upaniṣads realised by their insight and wisdom the utter worthlessness of this transitory world. They declared emphatically that nothing stands, nothing remains fixed and nothing endures for ever. Not only this : they were also eager to find out that which would make them deathless,

would place them in the *amrita-loka* or the region of immortality.

In the philosophy of Lord Buddha, we find that the interpretations of the worldly life given by him and the ultimate object sought by him were not different from those of the Upaniṣads. Lord Buddha has said : "Oh Bhikkus, listen, I have found *Amritam* which will bring to man an assurance of immortality."

In the four noble truths which Lord Buddha has preached, he has taught that the world is transitory and is, therefore, painful. He has further said that there are noble steps which one can follow to remove desire which is the cause of worldly existence. So far as this cause of worldly existence is concerned, there also we find parallel truths in Buddhism and Vedic philosophy. It has been stated in the Rigveda : In the beginning there was *Kāma*, the earliest seed of mind and the wise sages in their hearts found out the bond of *Sat* in *Asat*. In brief, we can say that according to this *Sūkta*, desire is the only snare that binds the world—there is no other bond. In Buddhism, *Māra* is depicted as the evil one who is the root cause of all sorts of sufferings and this *Māra* is nothing but *Kāma* or desire personified. The literature of the Vedic philosophy is full of this idea of *Kāma* and its annihilation, and in this respect Buddhism is, indeed, an offshoot of the great tree of Vedic religion.

All these similarities and many others have been brought to light by several oriental scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries who took pains to show how Buddhism in essence was not different from the Upaniṣadic thoughts and ideas which constituted the "central force" of the Vedic religion.

#### *Anti-Vedic Feature*

The most remarkable anti-Vedic feature of Buddhism figured prominently in the form of the "non-soul theory" which had denied emphatically the substantiality and

permanence of *pudgala* or *Jīva*. Egoity and personality, however, are admitted as unreal by all orthodox schools. So, by declaring the psychological self as false and fictitious, Buddhism could not show its difference from the Vedic philosophy and religion. The question of distinction and difference arises when one proceeds to find out if there is any permanent and transcendental soul beyond its phenomenal manifestation. The Vedic philosophy gives its view in the affirmative but Lord Buddha is silent on this point. This silence can very well be compared with the *Netivāda* of the Upaniṣadic philosophy, as *Netivāda* in a sense implies silence on the nature of reality. No adjective of the empirical world can be applied to *ātman* and so it is better not to make any attempt to explicate its nature. It does not seem to me that Buddha has denied the existence of a positive and spiritual reality. To taste truth is to be immortal and this immortality can never be a negative term. It is fully concrete and positive. If a positive and permanent spiritual reality is wholly denied then how are we to explain *amṛitattva* which Lord Buddha himself had sought and discovered? Here also, by observing "silence" on the question of immortal *ātman*, Buddha has followed only in the footsteps of his predecessors of the Upaniṣadic age. So far as fundamentals are concerned, it is now evident from the materials collected by eminent scholars of the Buddhistic philosophy that it was by no means a deviation from the traditional Upaniṣadic philosophy and religion.

#### *Reasons behind Lord Buddha's Heresy*

The question, therefore, arises : why did Lord Buddha refuse to admit the validity of the Brahmanic literature? One may also pose a question : how Lord Buddha, despite being profoundly well-versed in philosophy of his age, could openly become anti-Vedic in attitude bearing in mind that his teachings in spirit tallied with the Upaniṣadic philosophy? The answer can be found out by analysing critically the socio-political atmosphere of his age. The social conditions of



that age were not favourable for the Brahmins who were the sole dominating figures in the pre-Buddhistic age. According to Rhys Davids, warrior class was the most powerful section of the society in the age of Lord Buddha, and the power of the Brahmins paled into insignificance due to their various malpractices. Brahmins of that age were very much in favour of mechanical ritualism only and real philosophical quest was dead among them. The rigid orthodoxy of the Brahmins could not be stopped by the current ideas of the Upaniṣadic philosophy, and their rigorous insistence on *vārṇas* and *āśramas* naturally aroused disgust and hatred in the hearts of free thinkers. While Upaniṣads admitted the sanctity of soul, the so-called followers of the Upaniṣadic philosophy started despising human beings only on the ground of *varṇas*. The period was one of decadence of the Brahmanic religion and not of its expansion. The country needed a new mode of thinking to stop the ritualistic religion of the degenerated Brahmin class. This task was performed by Lord Buddha who gave India a new faith, philosophy and religion at a time when the priests and common people were steeped in narrow religious rites and superstitions. It was, therefore, quite natural of Lord Buddha to differentiate his new religion from the degenerated form of the traditional religion of the Hindus.

### *Raja Ram Mohun Roy*

In modern age, similar socio-religious task was undertaken in the 19th century by the great reformer Raja Ram Mohun Roy who like Lord Buddha, restored the religion of his ancestors to its original purity by introducing the more progressive and reformed religion of the Brahmo Samaj. The central core of Buddha's teaching was to re-orient the Upaniṣadic philosophy with a new emphasis. He was born in the Republic State of the *Śākya*s and he, therefore, automatically imbibed the spirit of freedom which was the accompanying virtue of a republican State. The profound rationality which

found expression in the personality of Lord Buddha was thus due to the political atmosphere in which he was born. He used to declare to his followers : "As the wise takes gold by cutting, burning and rubbing it on a piece of touchstone, so *bhikkus*, you are to accept my words, having examined them and not merely out of your regard for me."

### *Gospel of Ahimsā*

The gospel of *ahimsā* which has become the most valuable gem of Buddhism is also not a new addition to our religion and philosophy. It was recognised as an important virtue even by the orthodox Hinduism of the pre-Buddhistic age. It was because animal sacrifices were too much in practice in the age of Buddha that he vehemently protested against this cruel action and declared *ahimsā* as the supreme virtue.

It is evident from some of the verses of the *Sutta Nipata* that Lord Buddha was not really an antagonist of a true Brahmin ; he was disgusted with the malpractices of the Brahmin class of his age and was against the rigidity of the caste system. If we study the social and political history of Buddha's time, we shall find out that extensive liberalism, strict observance of moral principles, non-observance of caste distinction and a thorough rational outlook, which were the real ornaments of the Buddhistic religion, did not grow in Buddha through the grace of some supernatural agency. Buddha received them from the particular socio-political atmosphere in which he was born and educated. It is therefore, felt that in preparing a history of Buddhistic philosophy, these profound influences of the socio-political factors should be carefully analysed. It is also necessary to emphasise in such study that in essence and fundamentals, Buddhism is not really different from the Upaniṣadic religion of the Hindus. According to Rhys Davids, Buddha was "born and brought up and lived and died a Hindu. Gautama's whole training was based on Brahmanism. He probably deemed himself to be the most correct exponent of the spirit, as distinct from the letter of the ancient faith, and it can

only be claimed for him that he was the greatest and wisest and best of the Hindus."

### *Philosophy of Śaṃkara*

I shall now briefly refer to the philosophy of Śaṃkara. If Śaṃkara were born in the age of Nāgārjuna, perhaps he would have been a staunch Buddhist and not an *Advaita Vedāntist* of the first order. Some of his thoughts and ideas seem to me to be the "echoes" of Nāgārjuna's "Karikas." Despite so much affinity, Śaṃkara became an *Advaita Vedāntist* because during his time the religion of Buddha was in decay. Śaṃkara's definition of *Nirviśeṣa-Brahma* reminds us of Nāgārjuna's definition of *Tattva* or the ultimate reality given in his famous book *Mādhyamika-Kārikā*. Nagarjuna has defined *Tattva* as that which is calm, blissful, non-dual and harmonious where all plurality is dissolved and all cries of intellect are stopped. The dialectical arguments used by these two great personalities of two different ages are similar and there is similarity also in their methods of approach. Both held that the supra-intellectual non-dual reality cannot be grasped by the intellect which can proceed by division and dichotomy only. Ultimate reality is "silence" and it has got to be realised directly. Relational intellect working through concepts and categories, can give us only a relative and conditional reality. Ultimately, it is false, because it is different from both *Sat* and *Asat*.

The conditional and relative reality is called *śūnya* by Nāgārjuna and *Anirvacanīya* by Śaṃkara. Both of them have recognised the importance of the empirical world and have tried to give rational justification for its existence. In the *Mādhyamika-Kārikā*, it has been stated clearly that nobody will be able to reach the ultimate goal, if he neglects altogether the empirical truth of this phenomenal world. It is only through the lower that we can go to the higher.

In a brief article it is not possible to give a detailed analysis of similarities existing between *śūnyavāda* of

Nāgārjuna and *Advaita Vedānta* of Śaṅkara. I shall, however, try to analyse briefly the social and political conditions of India during the time of Śaṅkara and also prior to him. Such analysis, I am sure, will make us understand the reasons for Śaṅkara's allegiance to *Advaita Vedānta* school of Brāhmanic religion.

### *Age of Śaṅkara*

Just before the arrival of Śaṅkara in the field of ancient Indian philosophy, we find the glorious revival of the Brāhmanic philosophy and Sanskrit literature during the age of the Guptas. In this age, Brahmanism enjoyed imperial patronage and naturally, therefore, it again started exerting the paramount influence on the life, religion and philosophy of our country. This is the age in which we also find the disappearance of kingless republic and the reestablishment of the traditional hereditary monarchy on the soil of our country. The king used to be looked upon as the representative of Lord Viṣṇu, the supposed preserver of the entire world. This sort of political concept is nothing but a legacy of the age-old Vedic religion and tradition which remained in a subdued form during the period of supremacy of the Buddhistic religion. Of course, Brahmanic religion did receive imperial patronage during the reign of Pūṣyamitra Sunga who was a staunch enemy of Buddhism. It is held that he established a special hermitage for the grammarian Patañjali and encouraged him to write his great book *Mahābhāṣya*. Rights and privileges which the Brahmins lost during the reign of Asoka seem to have been restored to them by the Sunga king Pūṣyamitra.

The renaissance of the Vedic religion of the Hindus, however, was carried on brilliantly by the Gupta kings who reigned over the soil of India for many years. Hindu philosophy was systematised through their efforts and was also made popular among common people through *Purāṇas* and *itihāsas*. Sanskrit language which to a certain extent lost its



glory during the age of Pali-Buddhism, was again restored to its original position. Even Buddhist philosophers like Dingnāga and Vasuvandhu started writing their books in Sanskrit which was the main language and vehicle of expression of the Brahmanic culture. Buddhism was at that time in a state of decline in Central and Southern India. In that decaying condition, many malpractices and superstitions crept into its body spreading evil influences on all sides. It allied itself with *Śāktism* and *Buddha-tantra* became an important form of *tāntric* religion in our country.

### *Pressure of Brahminism*

The growing pressure of the Brahmanic religion was too much to be resisted by the dying religion of Buddhism and in order to maintain its bare existence, it had to adopt popular practices of the Vedic religion to such an extent that it could hardly be distinguished from being a sect of Hinduism in the 8th century A.D. It was in such an atmosphere that Śaṁkara was born. It is, therefore, evident that Śaṁkara with his great religious zeal should profess the faith of the vedas and the Upanishads which formed the major religious force in India at the time. In spite of his sharp power and logical precision which could find parallel only in Nāgārjuna, he could not adhere himself to Buddhism which was in a decaying state. Naturally, therefore, he came under the banner of Hinduism and began to start strong campaign against Buddhism. It seems to me that Śaṁkara was well aware of the fact that *śūnya-vāda* of Buddhism was not in spirit different from the *Advaita* creed and that is why instead of refuting the doctrine of *śūnya-vāda* on proper logical ground, he took the word *śūnya* in its popular sense of *Asat* and dismissed the theory unjustly in his *Bhāṣya*. Again, although in his philosophical treatise, Śaṁkara appeared as an *Advaita Vedāntist*, believing only in non-dual and characterless absolute; yet in his actual life, he was a worshipper of God *Śiva* and a follower of the *bhakti* cult.

This apparent anomaly in his life and teachings also could be explained by referring to the historical background of our country in the 8th century A.D. It was in this period that *Vaiṣṇavas* and *Śaivas* of Southern India started fighting against Buddhism and Jainism on the ground of *bhakti* and the cult of *bhakti* too, consequently, gained considerable ground during this period of Indian history. It will, therefore, be not wrong to suppose that Śaṅkara who belonged to the land of *bhakti*, could not overcome the theistic influence and in spite of his allegiance to *Advaita Vedānta*, he became the worshipper of personal God.

From the above discussion, it would be clear that a student of philosophy should be familiar with all these facts of great historical importance so that he is able to grasp easily the movement of thought from one age to another. The great personalities who introduced newer and newer forms of religion were not really the incarnations of God. There was nothing mysterious or inexplicable about them. Each of them appeared on the soil of our country as the result of historical necessity and it is time this aspect of history of philosophy is fully realised and grasped by every student of Indian Philosophy and religion. It is true, the history of Indian philosophy is still in the process of making and the only comprehensive historical record we possess today is the voluminous work by the eminent oriental scholar, late Dr. Surendra Nath Das Gupta. The works of Dr. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Chandra Dhar Sharma and others relate more or less to Indian philosophy in general but not to its historical aspect. In the context of new outlook discussed in this article, we should make a sincere attempt to prepare the history of Indian philosophy of different periods so that important social, political, and economic changes of a particular age may be reflected in a scientific manner. This way alone, we can expect to follow in the best possible manner the historical development of Indian philosophy of different ages.

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## PHILOSOPHY : INDIAN AND WESTERN

In this short article I wish to discuss critically the philosophical attitudes of India and the West with a view to finding out their points of agreement.

Philosophy in India, as we all know, was never viewed as a mere intellectual endeavour of the human mind to understand the world and its primary cause. On the other hand, the Indian philosophy sprung from an inner urge of human mind to rise above the sorrows and sufferings of this world. The study of the *śāstras* here was always directed towards the attainment of only one important end, i. e., the peace and tranquillity of the mind or the *citta*. The real being of an individual is not sorrow-stricken life of this empirical world : it is the transcendental life which is the timeless truth of all that is happening in time. The spiritual being of man is his essential being ; the shell of flesh and blood is only an artificial adjunct that gets attached to a soul due to *avidyā karma*. It is because of this adjunct that the individual appears as a worldly-being in a pitiable condition and goes through a false process of birth and death, bondage and sufferings for times without number.

### *Indian Approach*

The approach of Indian philosophy to truth and reality is, therefore, essentially moral and practical whereas the approach of the Westerners is essentially intellectual and rational. For example, the *Vaiśeṣika sūtra* has stated that philosophical enquiry should be undertaken so as to attain liberation and also to bring about good of mankind as a whole. The approach through morality does not however mean that Indian philosophy ends in ethical preachings. All ethical rules and precepts which Indian doctrines prescribe aim at transcending morality to attain the supermoral.

In other words, the goal of Indian philosophy lies beyond ethics, logic and psychology. These latter branches of knowledge are all appendages of metaphysics which contain the real key-note of all philosophical speculations. Although Indian philosophy aims at achieving more than what ethics, epistemology and psychology are capable of, yet these branches are necessary as the suitable means of approach to Truth which is supra-moral, transepistemological and meta-psychological. In other words, philosophy in India is neither mere intellectualism nor mere moral purism but includes and goes beyond all.

### *Western Approach*

This difference in the approaches of India and the West has created a further gulf in the methods of attainment of philosophical truth of the two countries. In the West philosophical knowledge refers to an intellectual comprehension or intellectual interpretation of the universe as a whole. It is the intellectual curiosity of man regarding the origin, development and goal of life and the universe as a whole which is satisfied by the philosophical knowledge. Hence, in the West, science and philosophy stand hand in hand so far as their origin in the form of intellectual curiosity, motive in the form of intellectual interpretation of the world, and the method of study in the form of reasoning and argumentations are concerned. Difference lies only in the choice of the subject-matter. While science seeks to study the universe, part by part, philosophy makes an attempt to study the universe as a whole. Since like science, philosophy in the West adopts generally the method of reasoning to attain the highest truth, the attainment of philosophical truth here is indirect and inferential and not direct and immediate.

### *Direct Realisation*

When we come to the sphere of Indian philosophy, we find that philosophy here seeks to bring about a change in the



personality of man. Mere intellectual apprehension of Truth about the world is not the real philosophical goal. In order to reach this goal, one should seek to have direct realisation of it in his own experience. Philosophical teaching in India consists essentially in making a man what he was not before. One who acquires *tattva-jñāna*, attains full freedom from the shattering influences of the various impurities of the world. According to Max Muller : 'Philosophy was recommended in India not for the sake of knowledge, but for the highest purpose that man can strive after in this world'. Of course, in India too, science has been regarded as a necessary help to philosophy and like philosophy, science too has sought to give human beings relief from miseries of life ; but a close observation of the motives of science and philosophy in India will reveal a fundamental difference so far as their goals are concerned. Science in India has always remained confined to phenomenal life and phenomenal existence of human beings and has never sought to make them rise above the level of this mundane existence. Sorrows and sufferings that can be removed by application of scientific results are only particular and specific and the removal also is short-lived and temporary. Science only seeks to find out the "how" of a particular sorrow but not its "why". Philosophy, on the other hand, sees through the real nature of pain and seeks to annihilate for good all pains that constantly grind human beings under their pressure. So, science in India is *aparā-vidyā* that helps a man in his day-to-day existence while philosophy is *parā-vidyā* which seeks to find out permanent liberation from the sorrowful worldly-life. The world is a condition of misery and an absolute cessation of world-feeling, therefore, is the goal of Indian Philosophy. The method prescribed for this purpose is the method of meditation resulting in an intuitive realisation of the Supreme Reality. The various terms like *tattvābhyāsa*, *jogābhyāsa*, *dhyāna*, *samādhi* etc. refer to this intuitive and supersensuous method which is supra-intellectual and supra-rational.

*Contribution to World Culture*

The Indian attitude in regard to philosophy can be summed up like this. It emphasises that philosophical endeavours should not stop at the intellectual discovery of truth alone : it should inspire a man to reach a state of enlightenment thereby transforming his behaviour and outlook upon the world. It seems to me that this attitude is a unique contribution of our country to world-culture. When the truth is realised, an individual becomes a new man and is able to see new significance and value in life. Plato, the famous Greek philosopher, said that philosophers alone are fit to be the rulers of a state. He evidently used the word "philosopher" to denote a man whose character has been moulded in the light of knowledge. This is because, in his opinion, a philosopher should be lofty-minded, liberal, pleasant, a lover of truth, justice, courage and temperance. Now everybody will admit that these moral qualities do not spring up in the character of a man merely from an intellectual apprehension of truth...Eradication of all the impurities of life needs strenuous moral discipline resulting in the inner progress of man. Knowing the truth and living through the truth acquired are entirely different. Unless one lives through the truth, it is not possible to attain that freedom and purity of soul which is indispensable for administering justice in every form of state in an impartial manner. If philosophy fails to make us rich, it at least succeeds in making us spiritually free and pure.

A philosopher who has purified his soul and has wedded himself to truth alone, is the best person to serve as the torch-bearer of human civilisation. Thus the differences which are generally noted and quoted by the superficial observers are neither unsurpassable nor unbridgable. A reflection on the nature of the philosophical enquiry of India and the West reveals to us that there is some common ground where the philosophers of both the countries are bound to meet. This

common point is the attainment of tranquillity and peace of mind which can be achieved only when the philosophy of life is rooted in truth and goodness. Self-culture and self-realisation have been highly valued in india as well as in the West. When it is stated that philosophy in the West springs from a love of knowledge, it is not meant to refer to a knowledge that adorns life only externally like an expensive piece of garment : on the other hand, philosophical knowledge in the West too has been believed to be rooted in the deeper soil of life i. e. in truth and goodness, so as to cast a magnificent glow on the character and personality of a man. This is the reason why Plato thinks that philosophers alone should be entrusted with the management of a state.

Socrates has said : "Virtue is knowledge." If a person fully understands the nature of truth, he is sure to pursue it. Without grounding his very being in truth resulting in calmness of mind, a man is absolutely incapable of practising virtues like temperance, justice etc., for the benefit of mankind as a whole. Thus, in the West too, philosophy aims at mental balance or equanimity suitable for the manifestations of various virtues in the life of a person, although this mental harmony is only a rational integration of sensibility and reason and not the tranquillity or transcendental spiritual life which is beyond reason.

### *Dignity of Man*

Again, Indian philosophy too lays a great emphasis on the dignity of man and on the significance and value of social life. It is not indifferent to the life in the world or to the social relations of human beings. Like the humanistic approach of the West, Indian philosophy also is interested in the promotion of ethical ideas with a view to bringing about betterment of social relations in the family of mankind. For this purpose certain common duties are recognised in Indian philosophy which constitute the very foundation of social relations and which are, therefore, to be practised by all persons in all societies without exception. Non-injury or *ahimsā*, *satya* or

truth, *asteya* or non-stealing etc. are the duties which must be followed by everybody to promote social good. Practice of these common duties ennoble human relations by promoting equitable adjustment of relative demands of smaller societies in a larger ethical life of humanity. It is, therefore, incorrect to say that while Western philosophy believes in a philosophy of world and life affirmation, the attitude of an Indian philosopher towards the world is wholly negative. The world is a necessary stage and it is also of supreme moral and sociological significance to work for the benefit of the world through the functioning of a pure will which is wholly free from all passions and prejudices of mind. While a western philosopher like Kant puts stress on the purification of the baser elements of human life by bringing them under the governance of Practical Reason, an Indian philosopher asserts that sensibilities and emotions can be purified only by the burning glow of the Light of the Spirit. It is only through the acquisition of spiritual enlightenment that the entire personality of a man is transformed and consequently he becomes a fit person to work for the betterment of human society in a disinterested manner.

### *Common Heritage*

In the midst of the present day world crisis, it is the imperative duty of every philosopher to bring to the notice of the world such common elements of all systems of philosophy of the East and the West so as to explore regions where all can meet and feel that mankind has a common heritage of culture and civilisation. The gulfs that we see today between the cultures of different countries are really artificial. If we make such an attempt in a manner indicated, it will be possible for us to have a real harmonious integration of different civilisations. This is how the philosophers of all countries will be able to create that atmosphere of inter-culture harmony in which world solidarity and permanent peace will thrive for ever.

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## **WESTERN AND EASTERN SPIRITUAL VALUES OF LIFE**

### *The Concept of the Spirit and the Spiritual in the West*

There is obvious difference between the Eastern and the Western approaches to the philosophical problem of the Spirit and the Spiritual. The Western mind, with its objective bias, refuses to recognize any distinction between the soul, the self and the mind. It is because Consciousness finds its expression through images, ideas and precepts etc. (which are the ingredients of Mind), that the Self or the conscious Principle has been equated with the Mind. Spirit, for the West, is therefore, something which can be known rationally and scientifically, and the existence of which is verifiable in a logical sense.

The being of a Pure Soul, separate from all kinds of psychical functions, has not been admitted in Western philosophy. The Self which has been established by the "cogito argument" of Descartes or has been regarded by Locke as the permanent substratum of all mental ideas or has been denied by Hume in favour of an impermanent stream of changing mental states and processes is nothing but a kind of mental substance, the different functions of which fall within the domain of our psychological study. The word 'psychology' too was originally used in the sense of the Science of Psyche or Soul, obviously due to the fact that according to Western definition, the Soul can become the subject matter of a rational and scientific study. The Definition of Psychology as the Science of Consciousness is a recent one, and even then by consciousness the Westerners do not mean Pure and Transcendental Consciousness which is beyond the range of any scientific study. Here consciousness refers to different forms of experience of normal human beings, and as such it is the subject-matter of empirical psychology which is an empirical

science. Bergson, for example, has said : "when we speak of mind, we mean above everything else consciousness." Again, in the opinion of A. C. Ewing, "Mind is used to cover the whole of man's inner nature and not merely his intellectual side... "The notion of a Pure Ego or any substance over and above its qualities, could not be defined in terms of anything else, so how can I know at all what it is like, how can I attach any meaning to statements about it?" This statement of Mr. A. C. Ewing shows clearly the attitude of the Westerners towards the problem of a pure transcendental soul which can never be known or verified through Logic. Against this background, the term 'spiritual' in the West refers to activities of emotion, will and reason directed towards the external world. In other words, in the West, the mental is equivalent to the spiritual. Due to this identification of the spirit with the mind, the status of the spiritual depends exclusively upon the status given to the mind. If mind is nothing else but brain as has been held by the Realists and the behaviourists of the Western world, then although from a pragmatic point of view we may attach some value to the spiritual, yet from the metaphysical point of view we will be bound to place both on the same level. There can then exist no difference between spirit, mind and matter. Although such identification is the trend towards which the West is gradually advancing, still for the purpose of this paper the word mind should be restricted to normal experience, and a reconciliation between the East and the West will be sought on that basis.

Now, due to this equation of mind and self, perfection of emotion, will-force and reason has become the highest ideal of the West. It is for this reason that they are so eager to enrich life with worldly possessions and to extend its activities as far as possible. They do not realize the significance of eternal life. The Pure Self which is the "Life of life, Hearer of ear, Speaker of all speech, Seer of eye, Mentor of the mind" is only a philosophical fiction for the West:

*Śrotrasya śrotam manaso mano yad, vācā ha vācum  
Sa u Prāṇasya Prāṇaḥ, Cakṣuṣaḥ Cakṣuḥ :*

The West believes firmly that human beings, by themselves, are capable of growing intellectually and morally to such an extent that the whole plan and purpose of the universe can be fully unveiled. With the completion of God's plan in time, an era will come into being when selfish interests will be totally given up and world-harmony can be established on a very sound and unshakable foundation. Perfection of humanity and perfection of the world constitute the final goal of man. It is indeed a very firmly rooted belief of the West that limitations of knowledge of human beings can be completely overcome through the progress of Science, and that things can be arranged in perfectly rational order, thereby satisfying fully the spiritual demands of man. To an Easterner, such a belief is the offspring of a false vanity of the conditioned being, whose very existence is supported wholly by the unconditioned and the Infinite.

### *The Concept of the Spirit and the Spiritual in the East*

The cardinal belief of all Indian philosophy and religion, on the other hand, is that the Supreme Truth is a Being or Existence which is beyond the intellect, ego, mind and all physical appearances we contact in this world. Intellect, ego, mind, etc. are changing principles ; and being changeable, they need an unchangeable consciousness to know them and also to be their support. So, beyond mind, life and body, there is to be found a transcendental and original spirit or self which comprises all that is finite and surpasses all that is relative and conditioned. Nature and Life are only limited manifestations of this Conscious Principle. The upaniṣads have again and again declared that this Supreme Spirit alone is real and that all things and beings of the world have emerged from this Self which is the infinite source of all that appears in the form of this world :

*"Karmādhyaṣaḥ sarvabhūtādhivāsaḥ sākṣi cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca"*

*"Viśvasya ekam Pariveṣṭitāram Jñātvā devam  
mucyote sarvapāś aiḥ"*

Since the Self is the one Supreme Reality, all life and thought are, in the end, a means towards the realisation of the Self which is the Soul of all souls and the Being of all beings.

Here the spiritual does not mean the mental or the psychical ; on the contrary, it refers to supramental consciousness which is the central core of a human being. This transpsychical, pure, immutable and self-revealing consciousness is not, however, a mere dogma propagated through the Indian scriptures. This has been established firmly on the evidence gathered from the intuitive realisation of the yogins and men of wisdom, and also on the basis of *yukti* or rational argumentations. The consciousness that constitutes the innermost self of man is the only thing spiritual, because it is the spark or reflection of that Great Spirit which forms the transcendental background of all appearances. Spiritual movement, therefore, means movement of Life and Nature towards that Great Ātman which is the Soul of the world.

Each one of us is provided with a life-basis here in this world, and the main end of each one of us should be a movement not only towards a scientific knowledge that aims at revealing the secrets of nature and life, but also towards that liberating knowledge of the Highest Spirit which alone is capable of bringing about a spiritual transcendence and release. Mokṣa is, thus, the only spiritual thing which possesses supreme value of significance, and as such it constitutes the highest *Purushārtha* according to the Indian view. Knowledge of all other things of the world is necessary only as a means to self-realisation. The word 'spiritual' has been used in Indian Philosophy to imply the standpoint of that Great Reality where all relativity and limitations are transcended. The path of the *Śreyas* is the path of self-knowledge and self-realisation. The ethical virtues like self-restraint, tranquillity, truthfulness, etc., are of the highest instrumental value, because these moral excellences alone can purify one's mind, thereby preparing it for self-realisation. The highest spiritual



value, however, is beyond the good and evil of worldly life and experience. The ideal is always the spiritual regeneration of man, and as such it is supra-moral and transcendental (Mundaka 3.1.):

*Distinction between Moral and Spiritual : Indian view.*

In India, therefore, there is a difference between Moral and Spiritual values. Since Moral refers to the standpoint of relative existence and Spiritual to the standpoint of transcendental existence, what is of value in the moral sphere appears unimportant in the domain of the spirit. The vision of the spirit may not therefore involve the practice of ethical duties. Still one who develops this vision does as a matter of fact stick scrupulously to the path of virtue.

In fact, moral excellences are generated in the embodied soul or in its *antaḥkaraṇa*. They are the auspicious qualities of empirical life, on the awakening of which the impurities of intellect, emotion and will are totally eliminated. As a result of moral purification, the *citta* or *antaḥkaraṇa* becomes a fit instrument for catching the glimpse of the Highest Reality, which is actually realised through meditation. In the *yogasūtra*, it has been stated that *citta* alone gets coloured with good and evil dispositions. The natural tendency of the river-like *citta* is to flow both for good and evil. So, the moral qualities serve as a sign to indicate the purity of *citta* or *antaḥkaraṇa*. They are not the qualities that belong to spirit in its pure form. Some hold that they are the dispositions of *buddhi* or *citta* as such, whereas according to others, they are generated in the soul in association with *antaḥkaraṇa*. In other words, *antaḥkaraṇa* is either both the generating cause and the substratum of the moral qualities or it is only the generating cause while the embodied soul is the substratum. In both the cases, moral qualities are the qualities of self-conscious living beings who live in the midst of diversified relations. So long as an individual regards himself as an individual living in association with many other individuals, the question of

cultivating the ten *dharmalakṣaṇas* of Manusmṛiti becomes his primary obligation.

In India the socio-moral good is closely linked with the good of the spirit, and for this reason a four-fold scheme of human life has been prescribed in the *Sūtra* literatures and also in the *Smritis* with detailed instruction for his duties in every stage of life. Relative morality in the forms of domestic, social and political morality is to be cultivated seriously and sincerely because moral qualities in diversified forms constitute the sole basis of the spiritual culture of human beings. The ultimate truth can never be grasped merely by an intellectual endeavour. It is to be realised by the whole of a purified personality—a personality that has passed through different stages of life and has been purified both externally and internally in and through the observance of all scriptural disciplines of mind and body. Truth is something that is to be lived and also made the central ruling principle of thought, life and action. Thus, in India, there has never been any gulf between philosophy and life. One who seeks to know the truth must first of all make his mind pure and clean, and this he will be able to do only if he will follow scrupulously and rigorously the prescribed rules and principles of moral life. This moral life has always been viewed as antagonistic to natural life or *Pravṛtti mārga*, and so it naturally takes the form of a life of struggle with the grosser aspect of man's life. The natural life is a life in which *sāttvaguna* remains in a subdued condition, with the result that it includes all the six passions (lust, anger, greed, pride, infatuation and envy) which stand as obstacles in the path of spiritual progress. Moral life is the life in which all these baser passions are subjugated by the ever-increasing influence of the *sattvaguna*. Since *sattvaguna* is directly connected with the spirit, the moral life too is harmoniously integrated with the spiritual life. Moral progress, therefore, means gradual realisation of the Good and the Divine in us till at last we get beyond the ethical sphere, and realise the absolute good and attain

liberation. The best instrument to be used for the purpose of conquering the evil passions of a natural life is the cultivation of the spirit of *aparigraha* which constitutes the foundation of Indian civilisation and culture. In the negative aspect *aparigraha* implies giving up the spirit of "selfish monopoly" after realising the evil that results from such greed. In the positive sense on the other hand, it means giving every man what is his due, and also administering justice to all in a spirit of Love and Service. In other words, *aparigraha* is synonymous with *vairāgya* which implies total renunciation of the ego-centric spirit. It is the firm belief of an Indian mind that nobody can do good either to himself or to society as a whole unless he cultivates the moral power of renouncing his own worldly happiness in favour of a higher truth and the happiness that results from it.

### *Views of the West*

In the West, no distinction has been drawn between mind and spirit or between two kinds of knowledge—transcendental and empirical. Therefore, for them morality or spirituality means fulness, richness and nobility of the human mind. Christ was a man of this world and He was the repository of all moral values. To awaken all the moral values in life is, therefore, the highest spiritual and moral end of man. "Christ is born and Christ spirit must be formed in men". Personal passions and affections should not be given up and the distinct sense of individuality should not be destroyed. The goal of man is to unfold in freshness and fulness his own fine and noble personality in and through his various worldly relations. Dr. E. Caird, for example, has said that a philosophy or theology which teaches men to abandon all earthly concerns and to uproot all passions and desires for the purpose of entering into an intimate relation with God simply means "an attempt to go empty-handed into an empty house". The thinkers of the Western world find it difficult to understand how man can have a higher nature which is not limited to the mind, and which is being continuously manifested

through various functions of life. This is because the psychological study of the west has, so far, been able to discover in its own way the secrets of waking, dream and dreamless states of the mind. The fourth and the *turiya* state in which pure consciousness is directly grasped is still beyond the sphere of Western psychology. The spiritual values of the West are, therefore, empirically fashioned, and they have been identified with moral values, which are to be cultivated in the midst of worldly conditions and worldly relations.

*Difficulties in the Way of Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Spiritual Values.*

From what has been stated above, it is clear that the fundamental metaphysical difference relating to the true nature of the Spirit or the individual soul is such that both India and the West have failed to appreciate mutually the merits and excellences of these two philosophical traditions.

To an Indian, the so called spiritual values of the West are simply the values of the moral life which is a life of struggle between the opposite tendencies of *citta* or mind. Ethics belongs to this worldly life, and its value lies in the fact that it is the only avenue to the realm of the supra-moral values of the life of the Spirit.

The West, on the other hand, is not willing to believe that everything belonging to our empirical consciousness is of a limited value, that our affections, bonds of friendship, great moral courage, sense of self-respect and dignity, etc., have only limited ends, and that for higher spiritual values, these should be left behind. Spiritual transcendentalism is something that is unintelligible to the West ; and for that reason, they very often declare that Indian philosophy preaches asceticism leading to a total renunciation of this world.

*Reconciliation*

If we ponder deeply over philosophical positions of both India and the West, we will certainly discover a meeting



ground where the two philosophical traditions can be brought together to form a sanctified confluence of the East and the West.

In the first place, we should remember that in India, due to the distinction between the empirical life and the life of the pure spirit, a chasm seems to have emerged between moral values and values of the transcendental life ; but this is more apparent than real. Spiritual values are nothing but the final flowering of the moral values, without which the highest spiritual development cannot be dreamt of. Just as will, intellect and emotion are inseparable for the highest psychological development of man, in the same manner moral and spiritual values are inseparably integrated. A man's life in this world as well as his various social relations are fully recognized ; and it is also asserted repeatedly that a man should first of all discharge properly all his duties and attain the ethical ideal before he can become fit for the Life of the Spirit. In the *Śūtra* literatures as well as in the *Smritis*, we can find a strong and positive outlook on life which is chiefly concerned with social good, social stability and general well-being of the people. The maintenance of social order is a very important topic in the *Rājadharmā* section of the *Mahābhārata* where Bhīṣma advises Yudhiṣṭhira to be morally and physically strong enough to punish all transgressions of social and political laws. Like the humanistic approach of the West, India, too, is interested in the promotion of moral virtues with a view to bringing about a betterment of social relations in this huge family of mankind. It is the practice of moral duties which alone can promote equitable adjustment of relative demands of smaller societies in a higher ethical life of humanity. The world is not to be despised, but it is to be looked upon as the necessary stage for preparation for the highest attainment. Here, the Westerners, who believe in the spiritualisation of human flesh as well as the worldly life, can join hands with the people of India who, too, believe in the transformation of the natural life to the

pure life of *Sāttvika-bhāvanā*, where moral excellences bloom forth in their bright radiance and pure glory. Though *Sattvaguna* does not constitute the nature of Spirit, yet it has direct contact with Pure Consciousness. In the yoga philosophy, *Sattvaguna* has been treated as the *upādhi* of God. From this point of view, even though India does not believe that the moral and the spiritual are identical, still, being a believer in the close intimacy between *Sattvaguna* and Pure Consciousness, the Indian view does come very near to the Western conception of spiritualisation of the baser emotions of the human mind.

Moreover, the West too believes in the crucifixion of the flesh; and if this expression has any moral significance, it means nothing but giving up of the selfish pursuit of gross and individual pleasures. This is both the moral and the spiritual goal of the West, because in the opinion of the West there is nothing else than perfection of humanity to which the highest spiritual value can be accorded. This perfection, the West seeks to attain in and through the family-life, the political life and also the life of society as a whole. In order to do so, the westerner too has got to expand his own self so as to cover the life of the community. Unless one identifies one's self with the self of another person he can never sacrifice his own good for the good of that person. Identification lies at the very root of all altruistic feelings and emotions. The altruistic spirit is prominently present in Western Philosophy. Only the Westerners do not believe in the Indian ideal of *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, because in their view, there is no transcendental soul which can be regarded as the soul of all finite souls. But if we can believe in the identification of an individual mind with the mind of a whole society, there is no reason why we should feel lost when we are advised to identify our individual souls with the soul of the whole universe. A Western mind may shudder at this very idea, thinking that this is equivalent to depriving his own self of all the good of this earthly life and reducing his blessed existence to a state which is as good

as non-existence. This idea is wholly wrong. Indian philosophy, too, does not advocate such emptiness as the ultimate goal. It simply teaches us to go on expanding our soul in a manner that it becomes large enough to cover the whole kingdom of living beings and non-living things. Limited possessions as well as partial conquest of the world can give us only limited happiness. If we can win over the whole of Life and Nature, our bliss and happiness will know no bounds. If the West makes a sincere endeavour to expand its self with a view to covering at least the whole world of mankind, she can come very close to the teachings of the Indian scriptures. If the West is not willing to give up her sense of egohood, then let her develop the sense of ownership of the whole world so as to be able to have the feeling of becoming the all and the great. The West has already learnt the lesson of "dying to live", and this means nothing but the process in which an individual soul goes on becoming larger and larger. He dies to his narrow limited self to live the life of a larger self. This is exactly what Indian spiritualism means when it desires the abolition of the narrow sense of egoity and the development of the spiritual capacity of treating all on an equal footing. *Samadriṣṭi* implies nothing but the expansion of self to become the Self of all. The only thing is that the expanded self in Indian view covers both spirit and matter, ego and non-ego, both of which are the manifestations of the Original Self. This sort of conception too is not foreign to the Western idealist who declares that the so-called antithesis between ego and non-ego is ultimately reconciled in God, as there is reason in both. If the West can be made to realise that the Indian spirit of *vairāgya* does not imply "other-worldliness" and that Indian spiritualism, too, is not antimoral,—if the West can accept that the Indian attitude to the worldly life is strongly positive and that the spiritual values depicted here are the final fulfilment of the moral values,—then the West will surely feel a close affinity with Indian spiritualism.

In the midst of the present day world crisis, it is, therefore, the imperative duty of every philosopher to bring to the notice of the world such common elements of all systems of philosophy of the East and the West, so as to explore regions where all can meet and feel sincerely and fully that mankind has a common heritage of culture and civilization.

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## **SPIRITUALITY—INDIAN AND AMERICAN : A REPLY**

The article on "Spirituality—Indian and American" by Mr. Wilson Organ, published in the January 1961 issue of the *Philosophical Quarterly* needs, in my opinion, a convincing reply. It is written in a popular style. Mr. Wilson Organ is certainly competent to state the American view-point on the subject and in the manner he has done. When however I find that he has made certain reference with regard to Indian spirituality and that too in a light manner, I feel, it is my duty as an Indian to try to remove any wrong impression which might have been created in the minds of some of his readers. On page 245 of the journal mentioned he has stated that he was shocked to hear at the 1958 Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress that in the Sannyasin stage of life, one does not need love : in his opinion such a view is against the teachings of modern psychology according to which "the human being never outgrows the need for love."

In my opinion, the Indian view about the stage of sannyās does not appear to be in conflict with the teachings of modern psychology. In India sannyās represents a particular state of mind in which the soul has a direct taste of the Life Divine. In this stage, the desires of the heart are completely renounced and the individual becomes wholly dispassionate and detached in spirit. Although he is detached, he is not isolated from the world. By isolation we mean isolation in spirit only. Since he has no desire for worldly pleasures, the so-called emotional indulgences of this world lose all charm and significance for him. His mind finds delight in the Supreme and he seeks refuge only in the Supreme. At heart he is unaffected by worldly losses and gains, love and hate, hope and despair. His whole heart which rests in the Supreme is peaceful, balanced and free. I am quite sure that a modern psychologist will not deny that if such a mental state could be

attained, then in that state a man could become absolutely indifferent to worldly love and hate. It is, of course, true that an ordinary human being does not outgrow the need for love, but a true sannyāsin in the Upaniṣadic sense is an *extraordinary person* who has risen above the consciousness of the body-mind to the realisation of the Supreme Being. Modern psychology does not deal with such an extraordinary and super-normal mind. It deals simply with the normal and abnormal constitutions and reactions of minds of ordinary persons.

I can appreciate the difficulty of an American to understand our viewpoint when we say that the true sannyāsin is nothing but a symbol of love and compassion for the whole creation. This love is not the narrow and limited love of an ordinary man. He does not become too much attached to anybody. To him all are equally lovable, because all are the sparks of the same Life Divine which is the main object of his devotion and adoration. In fact, the true sannyāsin gives away his whole heart to the Highest Being, and receives also inspiration and encouragement from that source alone. Since the love of a sannyasin is directed towards the object of Supreme Value, he naturally becomes indifferent to all worldly things and events. But this does not mean that he is hard-hearted. On the contrary, the taste of Divine Love melts his heart in such a manner that he always feels love and compassion for all and eagerly extends his help to human beings whenever they are in distress. His equal treatment without any partiality for any particular soul may outwardly seem to be a sort of indifference ; actually speaking, it is a form of self-less love which is devoid of all sorts of ego-centric attachment. Such true love can flood the heart of that person only who has tasted Divine Love.

On page 245, para 3, he remarks : "Spirituality for Indians means anti-materialism." Again on page 246, para 1, he says, "The American view of human life does not separate the material and the spiritual as does the Indian."

I am afraid, this is a very superficial criticism. It is not correct to say that Indian spiritualism is anti-materialism. In fact, Indians also do not admit an absolute separation between the material and the spiritual. Material happiness and comforts are no doubt necessary, but they are of an inferior value. The highest value lies in the realisation of the spirit which is the essential being of man. Life begins in a material world, and this material world does charm a man, nourish him, and provide him with all the material necessities of life. The soul itself remains wrapped up in a material covering—a covering to which we have got to give such importance as is its legitimate due. But man has got to realise his inner essence which is of the nature of the spirit. The realisation of this spirit constitutes the highest goal of Indian life. It is a case of transcendence, and not of antagonism, between spiritualism and materialism. As one ascends higher in the scale of spirituality, his material happiness gets transformed into the happiness of the spirit. At the ordinary stage, the happiness of the soul remains mixed up with the happiness of the world ; and in that stage, the happiness of the world gets prominence. This is the natural law of worldly life. Barring Cārvāka, no other system of Indian philosophy has given an independent significance to the material principle. Even in Sāṅkhya, Prakṛti becomes meaningful only when it is intelligised by puruṣa. Materiality is always deriving its significance from spirituality with which it remains in association. It is the spiritual which is of the highest value : so even in the case of material enjoyment and worldly actions, an adherence to spirituality must be prominent. *This is our Indian Culture.*

In another place he has stated that Indian philosophy teaches that a person must be poor and hungry in order to be spiritual and that attention to the needs or desires of the physical body necessarily disqualifies a person for spirituality. This impression of the writer is wholly wrong. Indian philosophy merely teaches that man should not regard

material happiness as the ultimate goal of life and should not therefore get too much attached to material happiness emotionally, because in that case he will be psychologically incapable of giving his best attention to the spirit which is his real essence. In fact, one who realises that spirit alone is of supreme value becomes naturally indifferent to those things which he considers to be of inferior value. For that reason, it does not matter whether a free soul lives in a palace or under a tree. Janaka was a King, but he was also the knower of the Ultimate Truth.

Mr. Wilson Organ has quoted words of Swami Vivekananda :

“In the West they are trying to solve the problem of how much a man can possess, and we are trying to solve the problem on how little a man can live”. What Vivekananda referred to is the virtue of *aparigraha*, which means a dispassionate attitude to material prosperity through the perception of its being tainted by cruelty and other defects. This is one of the most essential virtues of man according to the Indian view. It is the belief of Hinduism that all sorts of evils—social, political, moral, etc.—are the results of greed.

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## **TANTRA CULT IN INDIA**

It is a well-known fact that in India what we call Tantrism existed even in the Vedic period. The Atharva practice of sacrifices and chanting of Mantras for the performance of magic and miracles did occupy an important place in early Indian history and culture. It is therefore, quite reasonable to hold that through a prolonged practice, all these magic-spell and charms eventually developed and amalgamated into what we call "Tantrism."

If we study ancient Indian history, we find two different uses of the word "Tantra." In the wider sense, Tantra refers to any science, capable of spreading knowledge. This is the root meaning of the word and it has actually been used in this sense in the Mahabharata. Nyaya, Samkhya, Yoga etc. are called Tantras in this sense. The word, however, has also a very limited and technical sense. When used technically, it refers to that branch of knowledge in which characters, qualities and actions of gods are described and Mantras are also uttered with the help of which and also with the help of symbolic figures (Yantra) gods are invoked, worshipped and meditated upon in a specially formulated esoteric manner by the initiated ones only. Thus, there is a sort of mysticism veiling and hiding the real treasure of Tantra-religion from the general mass of the people. Disciplines needed for Tantric Sadhana are difficult and cannot be practised by a man without proper initiation. A Tantric preceptor has got to make discrimination in the matter of choosing disciples.

### *Philosophy of Tantricism*

Tantra-religion, usually grounded on "Advaita-philosophy," is a path specially schemed for the realisation of "one-ness" and unity amidst apparent diversity of the world.

The psychological make-up of the human mind is such that man finds it difficult to cling to a principle which is

beyond thought and imagination and which can be approached through intellect only and not through love and emotion. But desire for happiness, for pleasures and well-being is very intense and deep-rooted in man. So he is always in search of some such path which will lead him to bliss and happiness and will at the same time be more impressive and more appealing to him. Thus, the religion of Tantra with its emotional aspect together with the Mantras and Yantras was able to catch the imagination of a large section of people, who were not prepared to follow the path of knowledge and pure intellect. •

Utterance of Mantras used to have a special significance in Indian philosophy and religion.. “Śabda” is supposed to be the creative force of the universe. It has its origin in the imaginative power of Brahman. Imagination is a function of mind and all functions of mind are performed through words, uttered or unuttered. Imagination without “Śabda” is, thus, absolutely meaningless. So the world is made of “Śabda” and “Śabda” emanates directly from the highest principle. It is the creative energy, lying at the root of the world formation. So, through “Nāda,” “Śabda” or Mantra, one is able to reach reality. Therefore, Mantra occupies a unique position in all forms of symbolic and image-worship in India. “Nyāsa” Tantra is also based on this truth. By means of Nyāsa, consciousness is generated and felt all over the body and the worshipper is able to realise that he is all consciousness—pure and self-illuminating.

### *Śākta-Tantra & Devi-Śūkta*

“Śākta Tantra” like all other tantras owes allegiance to “Advaita-philosophy”. Since Brahman in its pure, transcendental form is immutable, undifferentiated and unchangeable, it admits the existence of Śakti or Creative Energy as the source of life and existence of the universe. Śākta-Tantra is based on the Devi-Śūkta of Vāk—the daughter of Ambhrin. The follower of Śākta-Tantra reaches his highest goal when

he realises his oneness with the Devi—the inexhaustive source of the whole universe.

The first Sūкта of Devi-Sūкта describes this creative energy as the underlying force of the phenomenal world. All physical and psychical categories of the world are nothing but its different manifestations. This creative force is the support of the eleven *Rudras* which are nothing but the symbolic forms of five organs of sensation, five of action and mind. These sense-organs are called *Rudras* as they are respectively the recipients of sensations, doers of actions and experiencers of pleasures and pains. It is because of these sense-organs that a man receives impressions from the external world and acts accordingly as a result of which feelings of pleasures and pains arise in his mind. This creative energy is described as the support of all wealth and power (Vasu) Dharma and Adharma, pleasures and pains (Indra and Agni). (All these are, however, represented by the names of the various gods.) In short the whole of the world has come into being from the womb of the Great Energy. It is, therefore, called *Mahāmāyā*, *Mahā avidyā* etc. in the *Chandi* and it is also the most beloved object of worship in the religion of the Śaktās.

### *Mental Conditions*

Śakta-Tantra recognises three different mental conditions to suit them. The three mental conditions are *Paśu bhāva*: *Vira bhāva*: and *Divya bhāva*. When one lives wholly in ignorance and has no knowledge of ultimate reality, he is only a *Paśu* or *jīva* in the grip of *pāśa* (snare). This is the lowest level and in this stage a man is advised to perform *Vedācāra*, *Vaiṣṇavācāra*, *Śaivacāra* and *Dakṣiṇācāra*. *Vira bhāva* is the next higher stage. In this stage, a man is able to grasp (although vaguely) the principle of “advaita” and he is, therefore, in a position to make an attempt to free himself from bondage and sufferings of life. Disciplines prescribed for this stage are *Varṇācāra* and *Siddhāntācāra*. The highest stage is called the stage of *Divya bhāva*. This is

attained when a man is able to merge himself completely in the *Advaita*-principle which is the ultimate refuge of the whole universe. Discipline prescribed for this stage is called *Kaulācāra*. The follower of *Kaulācāra* is a person who has full realisation of the oneness of the world. He is above all sorts of discrimination and distinction. He sees *Advaita* in all things and all things in the *Advaita* principle.

### *Kaulācāra & Pañca Makāra*

The word *Kaula* is derived from *Kula* which stands for *Kundalinī-śakti*. *Śiva* is called *Akula*. A *Kaulācāri* is able to rouse up *Kula-śakti* by means of *Yogavidyā* and is also able to unite *Kula* with *Akula* thereby effecting unity in diversity, *Advaita* in *Dvaita*. Practice of *Kaulācāra* needs five things, each one of which has *makāra* as its initial. These are *Madya* : *Māmsa* : *Matsya* : *Mudrā* and *Maithun*. The secret of these *Pañca Makāra* is not known to all. These names are really symbolic, standing for certain spiritual acquisitions and are not to be taken in their literal senses. A *Kaulācāri* is supposed to drink wine : but here "wine" stands for the nectar which flows from the lotus of the head when through spiritual elevation, the *Yogi* is able to bring about the blissful union between *Kula* and *Akula* or *Śakti* and *Śiva*. *Punya* and *Pāpa* are two *Paśus* and as a *Kaulācāri* is expected to kill both of them with his weapon of knowledge he is called a meat-eater. *Punya* and *Pāpā*, *Dharma* and *Adharma* belong to this worldly life. Man can realise oneness and unity only when he transcends and goes beyond them. The two veins *Idā* and *Pingalā* are called *Gangā* and *Yamunā*. The process of breathing in and breathing out are known as *Matsya* (Fish). A *Kaulācāri* needs to have full control over the processes of breathing.

He is therefore supposed to be an eater of fish. Shunning a bad company and seeking a good one is called *Mudra-Sandhāna* and a *Kaulācāri* is expected to be in a good company, suitable for the purpose of his esoteric practice. The intercourse or union between the vein *Susumnā* and vital



force of the body is called *Maithun*. This is the highest and the purest form of happiness attainable in life.

We find that the spiritual significance of *Panca Mākara* is of a high order. As these spiritual processes are mentioned through symbols, the disciple needs the help of a good teacher who will be able to explain and make clear to him the deep-rooted meaning of all *Ācāras*. It is because of this esoteric practice and mystic nature of *Tantricism* that it is so widely misunderstood and misinterpreted. The ugly distortions of *Tantra* in various ways are responsible for many evils that have crept into the blood-stream of our social life. *Pāñca Makāra* is ordinarily interpreted in liberal sense and consequently Śākta-Tantra is supposed to provide a man with an unlimited scope for sex-indulgence and other forms of licentious life. A true *Kaulācāri* is never a libertine. He has to practise strict moral discipline and observe rigorous moral rules for the realisation of spiritual freedom and elevation. It is stated in the *Meru-Tantra* that if a man wishes to be a follower of *Kula-Mārga*, he must behave like a blind person so far as other's properties are concerned, must be a neuter in the presence of another's wife and must have self-control in all matters of sense-enjoyment. The need for sense-control and self-control is, thus, no less important here than in other forms of Indian religion.

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## THE KARMA-YOGA OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Swami Vivekananda was a true seeker and lover of Brahman—the Bliss. In his opinion, *lokasaṅgraha*, the magnificent social expression of divine love, was an excellent form of worship of the Supreme. He believed that, through sheer selfless and disinterested humanitarian service, a person can reach the supreme goal coveted by the wise. Swami Vivekananda has wonderfully harmonized the path of selfless service with the path of knowledge. He has also offered us a unique interpretation of Advaita Vedānta, keeping in view both the fundamental position of the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara and the pressing demands of the new world. Such a work is only possible by a super-normal personality with a penetrating insight. For the first time, Swamiji gave us the idea that both spirituality and service are complementary ideals of the Vedānta, and that Advaita Vedānta is capable of bringing into harmony all religions, only when both spirituality and service are regarded as twin principles of this order.

### *Advaita Vedānta as Commonly Understood*

The general view regarding Advaita Vedānta is that according to this school, knowledge alone constitutes the direct means to liberation. Selfless service simply purifies the soul and makes it fit for receiving spiritual knowledge. One who has entered into the stage of *sannyāsa* gives up all forms of actions, as actions are meaningless to him in the final stage. The results that issue forth from actions are non-eternal. The *sannyāsin*, who with a purified mind has engaged himself in the search for eternal Truth, has naturally no need for various worldly things, including the results of actions (which are only transitory and non-eternal). Actions or fruits of actions can be of four forms : *utpāda*, *āpya*, *saṁskārya* and *vikārya*.

In the case of *utpādyā-karma*, the material stuff produces an effect without undergoing any change in its nature—as for example, cloth produced from threads. When the action does not produce any change in the object of the action, it is known as *āpyakarma*—as Devadatta's seeing the jar. When the action produces some *saṃskāra* of specific quality in the object of the action, it is called *saṃskārya-karma*. As for instance, in order to make the sacrificial cake, one has got to sprinkle water on the unhusked rice. In *vikārya-karma*, the material cause undergoes modification to produce the effect ; for example, milk changing into curd.

But Brahman is uncaused, ever attained, eternal, pure, devoid of change, and imperfection. So, it cannot be regarded as any one of these four forms of action or fruits of action ; and if *Barhmaprāpti* is not the result of any kind of action, then why should one, seeking to attain the highest and the greatest only, desire to follow the path of action ?

*Tasmāt na karmāsādhyatvaṃ  
Bramaṇo'sti kutaścana :  
Karmasādhyam tvanityamhi  
Brahmanityam Sanātanam  
(Sarva-Vedānta-Siddhānta-Sāra-Saṅgraha)*

Knowledge alone is the gateway to liberation and there is nothing else that can lead a man straightway to his desired goal.

*Jñānādeva tu kaivalyam  
Iti śrūtya nigadyate ; ... ..  
Mumukṣor yujyate tyāgaḥ  
Katham vihitakarmaṇah ;  
Iti śaṅkā na kartavyā  
Mūḍhavad paṇḍitottamaiḥ (ibid).*

This is how the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara is generally interpreted and understood by the teachers and the taught of Indian philosophy.

*Karma-Yoga As Interpreted**By Swami Vivekananda*

Now, let us see how the great Swami Vivekananda has interpreted *karma-yoga* so as to synthesize service with knowledge, both of which, in his opinion, are equally potent to lead a man to his desired goal (i.e. freedom of the soul or *mokṣa*). Swamiji has declared emphatically that the grandest idea of the Vedānta is its synthetic view so far as paths to liberation are concerned. 'The grandest idea in the religion of the Vedānta is that we may reach the same goal by different paths and these paths I have generalized into four—viz. those of work, love, psychology, and knowledge. Each blends into the other. These divisions are made according to the type or tendency that may be seen to prevail in a man. In the end, all these four paths *converge and become one*.' The general view of the Advaitins that knowledge and action cannot meet together (*jñānakarmanoh sahayogaḥ na ghaṭate*) has not found favour with this great *karmayogin* of India. On the other hand, Swamiji has taught us that action, understood in its proper spirit, can be synthesized very effectively with knowledge, and that there is no antagonism between the two. The only thing that is essential for us to do is to learn the secret of *karma-yoga*. Action in itself, is neither good nor bad. It has no inherent moral qualities. It becomes good or bad, efficacious for freedom or obstacle to freedom, only due to purity or impurity of motive from which it springs. If the motive behind an action is selfish, it is bad; if the motive is wholly unselfish, the action is both good and conducive to spiritual freedom. The secret of *karma-yoga* is nothing but spiritualisation of service by cultivating the attitude of selfless devotion to life divine. The pursuit of *karma-yoga* lies in making action free of all *rājasika* interests, and also, in shifting the motive from narrow egoism to the infinite bliss that supports the whole world. Action, performed in this attitude of humility, devotion, and selfless love for the whole universe, is nothing but



a form of spiritual *sādhana* which is wholly beneficial to liberation. In his eagerness for proving the efficacy of *karma-yoga*, Swamiji has gone so far as to declare : 'The *karmayogin* need not believe in any doctrine whatsoever. He may not believe even in God, may not ask what his soul is, nor think of any metaphysical speculation. He has got his own special aim of realizing selflessness ; and he has to work it out himself. Every moment of his life must be realization, because he has to solve by mere work, without the help of doctrine or theory, the very same problem to which the *jñānin* applies his reason and inspiration and *bhakta* his love.'

If we reflect deeply on *karma-yoga* as interpreted by Vivekananda, and also by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*, we find that selfless action is the dynamic side of spiritual freedom which is already an accomplished fact. It is not a fact that spiritual freedom arises as an effect from selfless service. Unless one has made his soul wholly free from the distracting influence of egoism and narrow individuality, he is not to be called a perfect *karmayogin*. It is the sense of egoism (*ahankāra* and *abhimāna*) that really constitutes the bondage of the soul. To remove this egoism, one has to have recourse to *karma-yoga*, which cleanses the soul of its defilement, and thereby, reveals its essentially free nature. So, in this case also, removal of the obscuring tendencies of *avidyā* by means of constant performance of selfless actions simply helps one to open the closely tight cover of the golden pot in which the nectar of immortality is to be found in abundance. The freedom of the soul is always present. It is not a thing to be acquired ; it has only to be revealed by the practice of *karma-yoga*. As there is no cause-effect relationship between knowledge and spiritual freedom, so also there is no such relationship between *karma-yoga* and the freedom of the soul. Both knowledge and selfless service are capable of removing *avidyā* that hides the real nature of Ātman by covering it with the dark spell of egoism. Destruction of this egoism is *mokṣā*. *Avidyā* and egoism constitute two points of view from

which the root cause of bondage can be visualized and verbalized.

Since destruction of egoism is necessary for the proper performance of selfless action, a *karmayogin*, too, is in a position to attain liberation by following the path of egoless actions. The Advaita Vedānta does not preach that action under all conditions is a snare and that the world is to be dismissed as an illusion. Action is not to be renounced totally ; rather it is to be performed in the world with the inner life wholly dedicated to the eternal spirit.

### *Śaṅkara and Selfless Service*

Śaṅkara's view on selfless action has been very aptly elucidated by him in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Inertia is not freedom, and freedom, also, does not logically lead to inertia and inactivity. Commenting on the second śloka of the sixth chapter of the *Gītā* Śaṅkara has said ; *Asti paramārtha sannyāsenā sādṛśyaṁ kartṛdvārakam karmayogasya.* That is to say, there is similarity between *sannyāsa* and *karma-yoga* since, in both, the giving up of ego-sense is absolutely necessary. *Karma-yoga* can be linked with the stage of *sannyāsa* in which the wise sage will perform actions not for his own welfare (not even aiming at his own *cittaśuddhi* for liberation) but for the welfare of the whole of mankind. Just as a true *karmayogin* gives up the habit of doing actions for his own self, rejecting completely the idea of his separate being, in the same manner the enlightened person gives up the habit of doing such actions which result from the false identification of the soul with the limited body-mind system. Whenever Śaṅkara has described the relation between knowledge and action as one of opposition, he has considered action in the sense of deeds performed with the intention of enjoying pleasures and happiness of this world or of the other world. Total annihilation of the feeling of *sva* (mine) is absolutely necessary for spiritualization of service.

In fact, Śaṅkara has admitted that there is no objection to the performance of selfless action, even after the attainment of wisdom (see Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Gītā*, III, 8, 20). In the stage of *sannyāsa*, the soul loses all ego-centric hankerings for worldly pleasures, and for that reason, the ordinary incentives to worldly actions no longer exist for him. He forsakes completely his habit of doing actions in the worldly-way, and hence he is a doer of action in name only. Truly speaking, the doer of action is one who thinks of himself as the sole agent and designer of the deed due to ignorance. When one is free from ignorance, his action assumes the form of *sādhana* and ceases to be a source of bondage. To link one's life with the life of divinity is not only to lose one's existence as an individual, but also to regain one's reality as egoless spirituality. His psycho-physical frame, then, assumes for him the form of a spiritual lyre, each string of which is attuned to the great music of the world. Whatever he does, at once, changes into divine service performed through his mind-body system. Hence, there is no incompatibility between *Jñāna-yoga* and *karma-yoga*, even though Vedānta declares that in the stage of *sannyāsa*, there is the destruction of *karma*, meaning thereby the destruction of all actions springing from the sense of individuality and egoism. This is, indeed, a stage when a person can be admitted as a non-doer even though he performs humanitarian services. Separateness of the deed from the doer exists only so long as the sense of egohood persists. But when a person has no sense of I and mine, he has no sense of ownership of actions, and consequently, he has no feeling of separation between himself and his action. He is divine, his action is also divine, and there is nothing for him but Divinity manifesting itself through sights and sounds, love and hate, knowledge and services of the world.

In the *Naiṣkarmya-Siddhi*, it has been stated that, just as a lamb cannot stay in the same place with a lion without being devoured by it, in the same manner, knowledge and

action cannot be linked together due to their incompatible nature.

Here, too, the author of the said text has meant by action only those which spring from a false sense of agency, due to beginningless ignorance. When an individual has made himself totally free from the sense of agency, he does nothing, even though he keeps himself engaged in disinterested social service. Social service, discharged in a spirit of detachment or divine service, can never be regarded as a snare, because this type of work is not prompted by the individual's desire for his own happiness (*svakalyāṇa buddhi*). Even God acts in this world for the sake of world maintenance and progress. Just as God never becomes bound by his actions, in the same manner, the *sannyāsin*, who has emptied himself of all egocentric desires, does not bind himself by his egoless actions. As he has no selfish motive, he lays claim to nothing and surrenders himself wholly to the supreme Being. Action, understood in this sense, has no antagonism with knowledge and is, therefore, not destructible by knowledge. In fact, service is nothing but knowledge viewed from the dynamic aspect of life.

### Conclusion

Thus, from the above discussion, it is clear that service can be synthesized with knowledge even from the Advaitic point of view, if by service we mean only those actions which are done by the wise sage for *lokasaṅgraha*. Actions are not his duties in the sense that they are obligatory on him. On the other hand, any humanitarian service done by the wise is a spontaneous manifestation, in a dynamic form, of the nectar of wisdom that he has drunk. He becomes the master of all actions by cultivating detachment and faith in the Absolute. The freed soul works for the guidance of men who are still steeped in ignorance. He is the doer of work and is yet not the doer, because he has no sense of 'I' and 'mine'.



If the individual soul is Brahman (as has been asserted by the Advaita Vedānta), then service to individual soul (*jīva*) is service to Brahman. The individual soul is the symbol (*pratīka*) through which Brahman is worshipped. The individual soul is, however, associated with the body-mind organism, and so, this body-mind organism must be properly nursed and purified if any real service is to be rendered to the indwelling spirit. Keeping this in view, the wise sage works spontaneously for the betterment of all the living conditions of the *jīva*.

Hence, from this point of view, the humanitarian services performed by a *sannyāsin* are nothing but the spontaneous fulfilment of the divine purpose through a perfected personality. The secret of *karma-yoga* is the annihilation of *ahamkāra* and the attunement of one's being to the purpose of divine life. Service in a detached spirit is the outer side of spirituality and knowledge is the inner side. So, the two can go together as the outer and inner aspects of the same spiritual process. The very subtle metaphysical distinction between the self-effacement of *niṣkāma-karma* and the self-negation of *Brahma-jñāna* loses its meaning when viewed from the standpoint of psychology and practical life.

Even Śaṅkara had to work hard for re-organising Hindu society on the new model of Advaita Vedānta, although he was a *jīvanmukta puruṣa*. He had also founded *mathas* in various places so as to facilitate propagation of his views among masses in different parts of India. When Śaṅkara himself did so much humanitarian service in his own life, how can it be proper for us to maintain that the stage of *sannyāsa* is a stage of perfect inactivity? Swami Vivekananda has rightly remarked : 'The Vedānta...as a religion must be intensely practical. We must be able to carry it out in every part of our life. And not only this, the fictitious differentiation between religion and the life of the world must vanish for the Vedānta teaches oneness of life throughout. The ideals of religion must cover the whole field of life, they must

enter into our thoughts and more and more into practice. When truth is fully realized, realization finds spontaneous expression through thought, feeling, and emotion of the perfected personality inspiring him to undertake magnificent service for human good.

Of course, it is true that a *jīvaṁmukta puruṣa* does not consider himself either as a *Brāhmaṇa* or as a *Kṣatriya*; nor does he consider himself either as rich or poor. He is devoid of these sorts of *abhimāna*. Nevertheless, he retains one *abhimāna* which he is not able to get rid of, unless his *prārabdha karmas* are fully exhausted. This is his awareness of himself as a man (*naratvābhimāna*). It is because he is a perfected human being that all the excellences of mind befitting a man are freely manifested through all his truly humanitarian activities. He, then, becomes the most benevolent saviour of the suffering humanity. This is precisely the attitude adopted by the great Swami. He has rejected the idea of the selfish salvationism and quietism and has preached again and again that the ideal of a *sannyāsin* is 'service to humanity'. He himself has said that Śaṅkara has kept his Advaita confined to those *sannyāsins* who have decided to live out of the world, i.e. in caves and mountains. The principal duty and mission of a *sannyāsin's* life is to sow the seeds of oneness of soul even in the soil of the life of the worldly people by teaching and preaching to them the secret of *karma-yoga*.

The discrepancy between knowledge and action arises only when action is not understood in its proper spirit. When action is spiritualized, it ceases to be an action in the ordinary sense and can very well be synthesized with wisdom or knowledge. Hence, in the opinion of Swami Vivekananda, one who is able to realize the *advaita-tattva*, feels an urge to make sincere endeavour, with a view to awakening that realization in others. It is only when the *sannyāsin* enters into the worldly stage, being equipped with *Brahmajñāna* and *karma sādhanā*, that he gets full scope for realizing his oneness with the whole world. When the whole world is



completely encompassed by his own being, he feels an intense urge to work for the welfare of all (just as in the bound state, one feels an intense longing for doing such actions as are conducive to one's own good). To realize the oneness of all souls through disinterested service to humanity is what Swamiji has called practical Vedānta. This practical Vedānta, indeed, is the only form in which the teachings of Śaṅkara can be moulded without contradiction, so as to become a world-religion, the saving knowledge of humanity for ages to come.

It is not possible to do full justice to the great life of Swami Vivekananda in a short article. Deeper than his genius, greater than his eloquence, even higher than his sacrifice is the character of the man, which at once excites our wonder and admiration, love and respect. That which made his character so great and noble was the belief that man was divine, and selfless service to him was the highest form of worship. To India, Swami Vivekananda has left a legacy which will sustain her for centuries.

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## **THE CONCEPT OF HUMANITY IN INDIAN CULTURE**

*From the Vedic Age upto the Age of the Smṛtis and Sūtras*

The subject I have chosen is a difficult one. In the first place there is no historical record of Indian thought. In the absence of thorough chronological recording of thoughts and facts of life of the ancient Indian people, it is generally difficult to trace chronologically the origin and development of any ethico-philosophical concept in India. This article covers the period from 2000 B. C. to 300 A. D.

We find that the Indians of the ancient period cared more for the truth realised : they did not attach any importance to the life and the date of the propagator of a particular form of Truth. In fact, they were more interested in enjoying the flowers and fruits of the tree of religion than in trying to find out the planters. So, the proposed attempt to trace the root of the concept of humanity in Indian culture is based mainly on the dates which have so far been collected through the strenuous efforts of several oriental scholars.

### *Concept of Humanity in Vedic period*

The period extending from about 2000 B. C. to 600 B. C. is generally known as the Vedic period. This period is divided into three parts, namely (1) the age of the Saṁhitā : (2) the age of the Brāhmanās : (3) the age of the Upaniṣads. The age of the Saṁhitā refers to the period when the Mantras or the hymns were composed by the Ṛṣi-poet of the Vedic age. The Brāhmanās are the elaborate ritualistic treatises, whereas the Upaniṣads consist of the revelations of the mystic philosophers.

The general theory about the pre-upaniṣadic age is that this was an age when the march of mind reached merely the